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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

A DEVELOPMENTAL ANALYSIS OF DEPICTIONS OF THE EVENTS OF KARBALĀ' IN EARLY ISLAMIC HISTORY

VOLUME ONE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF NEAR EASTERN LANGUAGES AND CIVILIZATIONS

BY

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

JUNE 2001

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without whom this project would never have been possible.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my father's beloved "m & m",

with high hopes for your success and your future.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Subject, Methods, and Goals

Despite the fact that the events of the battle of Karbalā' (61AH/680CE) were a defining moment in early Islamic history in general, and Shī'ī history in particular, there is a conspicuous lack of historical literature that looks deeply into this subject. Although innumerable works of dogmatic Shī'ī propaganda have been and continue to be published on Karbalā', the events revolving around the Karbalā' incident, including the political tensions that erupted just weeks prior to the battle, the battle itself, as well as its far-ranging consequences that vexed the new Umayyad dynasty and changed the course of Islamic history, have been all but neglected in critical historical literature. The fact that not only 'comprehensive' works on Islamic history, [1] but even works dealing specifically

[1] See: A. J. Arberry, *Aspects of Islamic Civilization* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1964); Thomas Arnold and M. Guillaume, *The Legacy of Islam* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931); G. R. Hawting, *The Umayyad Caliphate, A.D. 661-750* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987); Phillip K. Hitti, *Islam* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1970); Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958); Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: the Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century* (London: Longman Publishing, 1986); Ira Lapidus, *Contemporary Islamic Movements in Historical Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979); Joseph Schacht, *Legacy of Islam*

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with Shī'ī history [2] gloss over the battle of Karbalā' is highly problematic. In fact, the absence of any very detailed study on this crucial topic is astonishing. For some reason, it seems that critical historical scholarship has largely underestimated the significance of the events of Karbalā' in changing the course of Islamic (and world) history. The Karbalā' incident clearly serves (and has served) as a retrospective origination point for the international Shī'ī community, providing it with a vehicle by which it can construct its own identity.[3] Unfortunately, it appears that most modern scholarship by Islamic historians in the West dealing with Shī'īsm is concerned either with modern political history, or with Shī'ī theology, rather than with these Karbalā'-related rituals and the aspects of early Islamic history that helped shape simultaneously the development of rituals and the Shī'ī communal identity. Conversely, most Near Eastern publications on the subject are merely reiterations of already established Shī'ī dogma that the community formulated as part of its identity centuries ago. It seems that a fixed conceptualization of

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(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974); Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1968); and Gustave Von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1946).

[2] See: Dwight Donaldson, *The Shī'ite Religion* (London: Luzac, 1933); Heinz Halm, *Die Schia* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988); Etan Kohlberg, *Belief and Law in Imāmī Shī'īsm* (Hampshire: Gower Publishing, 1991); Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shī'ī Islam* (Oxford: G. Ronald Co., 1985); and Richard Yann, *Shī'ite Islam: Polity, Ideology, and Creed* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1995).

[3] This is what is referred to by Donner as a 'theme of inception' in the context of the Shī'ī community, and a 'boundary theme' in the context of the broader Muslim community. See: Fred M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins: the Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1998),142-3.

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the events has crystallized throughout the centuries, to which not only classical Islamic historians of the middle Islamic periods, but also generations of Western scholars have all fallen victim without considering just how that conceptualization became fixed in the first place.

This thesis intends to trace the development of depictions of the battle of Karbalā' through the centuries, and to study through critical analysis of the earliest sources how later Shī'īs developed elaborate rituals commemorating Ḥusayn's martyrdom and his final battle, and how the literate class of Shī'ī *'ulamā'* scholars added to and institutionalized these rituals as an integral part of Shī'ī cultural and religious identity. It is precisely this crucial point -- where the historicization of the battle in the literature, the development of the rituals commemorating the battle, and the construction of identity all meet -- that modern sources, dramatic and historical, dogmatic and scholarly, Eastern and Western, all seem to miss. With this in mind, it seems almost a blessing for the researcher interested in studying precisely this point that there is no lack of historical accounts of the battle of Karbalā'. A number of early classical sources, both early Sunnī and later Shī'ī ones, include lengthy narratives on the incident and serve as potential gold mines of information upon which a critical study can be based. What is utterly lacking, however, is a scholarly investigation into precisely how, when, and why the events of Karbalā' became such an important turning point in the self-conceptualization of the Shī'īs that a

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full range of elaborate rituals have developed for their commemoration, and the social implications of this development.

A preliminary investigation of related primary sources indicates quite clearly that, because of the importance of the battle of Karbalā' and the murder of Ḥusayn in the consciousness of the early Islamic community, nearly every historical work written or compiled in the early period has a significant section on the events of the battle of Karbalā'.[4] Furthermore, because of the importance of Husayn as a major figure in early Islam, the numerous biographical dictionaries that were compiled in the early Islamic era also provide information on Ḥusayn and Karbalā'. But, even aside from the significant quantity of information available from the classical Islamic historical sources and biographical dictionaries, [5] which present, for the most part, a Sunnī perspective on Karbalā', an entire genre of *maqtal* (martyrdom) literature has developed (particularly among Shī'ī scholars) that deals exclusively with this subject, and in remarkable detail. Like the Sunnī histories and biographical dictionaries, these often provide extensive *isnād*s (chains of transmission) detailing the sources and chains of transmission of the material, and their origins can be traced, sometimes to the same and sometimes to different sources. At least with regards to the Karbalā' commemoration rituals, two of the most prominent works of Shī'ī literature are Kulaynī's *al-'Uṣūl al-kāfī*, which was

[4] A detailed listing of classical sources to be used in the course of this investigation is provided in sources section, below.

[5] See sources section, below.

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composed just prior to the Būyid period, and Muhammad Bāqir al-Majlisī's *Biḥār al-anwār*, which was composed under the Ṣafavids. These two works in particular present valuable information that helps to broaden our understanding of the development of *ziyāra* (ritual grave visitation) and other rituals performed at Shī'ī shrine sites in general, and at Karbalā' in particular. Finally, there are also a number of other sources that provide information on the events of the battle of Karbalā' and on Ḥusayn, including source texts that can not be categorized as either histories or biographical dictionaries, and recently published portions of works previously unavailable except in manuscript. [6]

Interestingly, these biographical dictionaries, histories, *maqtal*s, Shī'ī encyclopedias, and other works, some of which are considered by Shī'īs themselves to be masterpieces of their own literature, sometimes seem to portray rather different depictions of the events of Karbalā'. Careful analysis of the literary sources reveals a variety of ways in which the events of Karbalā' and Ḥusayn himself are depicted in both the Sunnī and Shī'ī texts. Although one might expect a more clear division along sectarian lines in the ways in which Sunnī and Shī'ī authors depict the events of the battle of Karbalā', the division is far from clearly defined. Similarly, in depicting of the character of Ḥusayn himself, both of the two most common characterizations of him (Ḥusayn as a hot-headed rebel against the establishment and Ḥusayn as an innocent victim of ruthless power-mongers) appear in both Sunnī and Shī'ī literary sources. There appear to be not only

---

[6] Note *Tasmiyat man qutila ma'a al-Ḥusayn* and *Tarjumat al-imām al-Ḥusayn wa maqtaluhu* in sources section, below.

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subtle discrepancies in the depictions of the actual events of the battle of Karbalā', but also discrepancies in the terminology used to describe Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and other participants. And, aside from the discrepancy in terminology, there also seems to be a similar discrepancy in sources. It is important to investigate precisely which sources are shared by which authors, and which are used by only one author, as well as the possible reasons for each author's apparent discrepancy in reliance on a particular source or sets of sources over others. It must also be determined to which particular episodes these narrations are related, and how it may have been to the advantage of one or another of the authors to include or exclude that narration when writing his version of the events of Karbalā'. It is quite possible that authors of different periods and/or differing sectarian or political inclinations selected sources that supported their point of view while rejecting sources that did not, despite the fact that both may have had sound chains of transmission. Also, although an example of each is included among the sources examined in this study, there seems to be a conspicuous dearth of Fāṭimīd (Ismā'īlī) and Zaydī literature on the topic, presumably because of their varying conceptions of the *imāma* leadership, and perhaps because neither the Zaydīs nor the Ismā'īlīs needed to make use of the events of the battle of Karbalā' as a retrospective origination point to define their communal identity, as did the twelver Shī'ī community.

This thesis will attempt to view the depictions of Karbalā' developmentally, from the earliest to later periods, and from both Sunnī and Shī'ī primary sources from the

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central, Eastern and Western Islamic lands while including in appendices corroborating evidence available from ritual, folkloric, and even material sources. Indeed, because the bulk of the detailed research necessary for this study is based on the historical literary sources, this thesis will, out of necessity, focus on those sources to understand the early developments. The second and third chapters will involve two aspects of the Karbalā' narratives that appear to have actual historical bases, as evidenced by a number of other studies of the phenomenon outside of the Karbalā' context. Namely, these two chapters will deal with the Karbalā' narratives' portrayals of an existing awareness of pietistic and genealogical-consciousness among the early Muslim community, particularly as it relates to Ḥusayn, and secondly, the early Umayyads' use of propaganda and Qur'ānic rhetoric heavily based on the logic of the *jabrīya* school of thought to legitimize their involvement in, and the outcome of the battle of Karbalā'. This second factor will be examined particularly in light of modern propaganda theory, a field that has developed in this century as a way to analyze wartime propaganda. As we shall see, there are remarkable correspondences between factors identified by modern propaganda theorists and the events described in the historical Karbalā' narratives. The fourth chapter will deal with the economic aspects of the Umayyad anti-Ḥusayn propaganda campaign, some of which, such as the use of foreign mercenary troops in the Umayyad military, can be corroborated by non-Karbalā' sources, but much of which appears to be retrospectively fabricated. These first three chapters will discuss depictions of events that are more or less agreed

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upon by the Karbalā' sources. That is not to say that these accounts reflect exactly the historical realities of Karbalā', but merely that the sources tend not to dispute the basic series of events. What the sources *do* disagree on is the subject of the fifth chapter, which will deal specifically with the variations in the sources' *characterizations of individuals* depicted in the Karbalā' narratives. As we shall see, unlike the basic events of the narrative, which are practically agreed upon by the sources, it is these depictions of the character of figures such as Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī or Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya that often betray the author/compiler's political and sectarian biases and serve to influence the reader's judgement of the individuals involved. Finally, the fifth chapter will conduct a general analysis of the original sources of the Karbalā' accounts by examining the relation between information provided to us from *isnāds* and that provided by the narrative texts, and present the conclusions of the textual aspects of this study. Finally, an epilogue provides information on related findings regarding aspects of this study such as rituals, folklore, material culture, and retrospective communal identity, as well as other potential topics for study.

Brief Summary of the Events of Karbalā'

Despite the fact that different sources vary on a number of specific details in relating the accounts of the Karbalā' narratives, there seems to be a general consensus on the basic series of events. The major differences between the sources lie not in the series

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of events themselves as much as in the detail with which they are recounted, as well as the lack of chronological continuity and the authorial biases that skew the way in which those same events are depicted. The following summary will attempt to provide a brief account of the most significant events of the Karbalā' narratives, as generally agreed upon by the sources. Doing so necessitates the elimination of certain aspects of individual narratives that give them a pro-Umayyad or pro-Ḥusayn bias. In addition, the events in the following summary have been organized in chronological order, something which is often not given enough attention, or even ignored altogether, in some sources. The result is intended to provide the reader with a brief account of the essential events depicted in the Karbalā' narratives, with chronological consistency, and without sectarian or other authorial biases.

During the lifetime of Mu'āwiya, and after the death of his arch-enemy, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, the supporters of 'Alī sought leadership in 'Alī's son, Ḥasan. After a brief military confrontation with Mu'āwiya's forces, Ḥasan signed a peace treaty with Mu'āwiya stipulating that Mu'āwiya guarantee the safety of the lives and property of the followers of 'Alī. When Ḥasan died, Kūfan 'Alid loyalists came to Ḥusayn seeking his leadership in waging war against Mu'āwiya, but Ḥusayn refused, citing his obligation to abide by his brother Ḥasan's peace treaty. Later, Mu'āwiya died (60/680), having appointed his son Yazīd as his successor, thereby establishing the first dynastic succession in Islamic history. Yazīd wrote letters to the governors of the provinces,

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ordering them to request the allegiance of the major figures in each province. In Madīna, Ḥusayn was summoned to the home of the governor, where he refused to give his allegiance in secret. Ḥusayn claimed that he wished to call a public meeting in the morning and giving allegiance in a public gathering. As it turned out, Ḥusayn never took part in such a gathering. Instead, he traveled under cover of darkness to Mecca and prepared for the coming *Ḥajj* season. At Mecca, ʿAbdullāh b. al-Zubayr vociferously rallied the locals and visiting pilgrims against the Umayyads, and attempted unsuccessfully to persuade Ḥusayn to join his opposition movement. In the meantime, the Kūfans heard of Muʿāwiya's death and of Ḥusayn's refusal to give allegiance to Muʿāwiya's son Yazīd, and decided to try to convince Ḥusayn to lead them in opposition of the Umayyad establishment. Messengers with letters numbering in the hundreds came to Ḥusayn, urging him to come to Kūfa to lead them. Ḥusayn sent his cousin, Muslim b. ʿAqīl, to Kūfa to investigate the feasibility of Ḥusayn's going to Kūfa.

Muslim b. ʿAqīl first went to Madīna to bid his family farewell, then hired several guides to lead him from Madīna to Kūfa. Along the way they lost their way in the desert and his guides died of thirst. When Muslim finally reached a small oasis village he wrote to Ḥusayn explaining the situation, and Ḥusayn instructed him to continue. When Muslim reached Kūfa he stayed at the home of Mukhtār b. Abī ʿUbayd al-Thaqafī and began to gather support from the Kūfans. After being convinced of support for Ḥusayn at Kūfa, Muslim sent a letter to Husayn indicating that he should come to lead the people.

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Yazīd was informed of this and ordered his governor of Basra, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, to go to Kūfa and take charge of the situation. 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād did so, entering Kūfa disguised as Ḥusayn, and the Kūfans gathered in the streets, welcoming him *en masse*, until he went to the castle at Kūfa and someone recognized his true identity. After removing Nu'mān b. Bashīr, the previous governor, from office, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād announced his intention to crush any opposition to Umayyad authority. Muslim b. 'Aqīl heard of this and moved to the less conspicuous home of Hāni' b. 'Urwa and attempted to remain more aloof. After assigning informants to spy out Muslim's location, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād invited Hāni' b. 'Urwa to the castle, then beat and imprisoned him. Hāni''s tribe, thinking that Hāni' was killed, surrounded the castle threatening revenge. 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād ordered Shurayh al-Qāḍī to go to the dungeon, look at Hāni', and then ascend the rooftop to announce to the people that Hāni' was alive. He did so, without telling them that Hāni' was beaten, bleeding, and imprisoned. The crowd dispersed satisfied. 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād then had Hāni' killed at the sheep market. Hearing of the murder of Hāni', Muslim called his supporters together and they surrounded the castle with nearly four thousand men. 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, having no more than thirty soldiers and a number of the *ashrāf* (notables) of Kūfa in the castle, ordered the *ashrāf* to ascend the roof and threaten the crowd with Umayyad troops coming from Damascus, and with abolition of the Kūfans' pensions from the central government treasury. The crowd gradually dispersed, until, by nightfall, Muslim b. 'Aqīl

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had only a few supporters, and by the time he finished his prayer, no one remained behind him. He wandered the streets of Kūfa until he came across an old woman in the Kinda neighborhood who was waiting by the door of her home for her son. After discovering his identity, she let him spend the night in her home, but warned him that her son worked for 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād. Meanwhile, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād threatened from the pulpit of the congregational mosque that anyone caught harboring Muslim b. 'Aqīl would be crucified on the door of his own house. The son came to stay at his mother's home, discovered Muslim b. 'Aqīl, and informed his superior. In the morning, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād sent Muhammad b. Ash'ath with a number of troops to capture Muslim b. 'Aqīl. After intense fighting, they offered him amnesty if he surrendered, and he did. Then, in the castle, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād and Muslim b. 'Aqīl hurled insults back and forth at each other, and at their respective leaders. 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād had Muslim b. 'Aqīl killed at the roof of the castle, and had his head and body thrown to the street for all passersby to see.

Meanwhile, with 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubayr planning a rebellion which was soon to break out, and Husayn not wishing to instigate bloodshed in Mecca on his part, Ḥusayn decided to act upon Muslim's letter and go to Kūfa, and left just before the beginning of the *Ḥajj* season. When the 'Amr b. Sa'īd b. al-'Āṣ, the Umayyad governor of Mecca, heard of this, he sent his guards to prevent Husayn from leaving, and they took part in a scuffle on horseback at the outskirts of Mecca. Ḥusayn's camp was successful in pushing

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through the guards, and continued onwards towards Kūfa. At Tan'īm, a watering place not far from Mecca, Ḥusayn found a caravan from Yaman headed for Damascus laden with gifts from the governor of Yaman to Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya. In a scenario reminiscent of Muhammad's capture of a *jāhilī* (pagan) Meccan caravan, Ḥusayn ordered his followers to appropriate the wealth of the caravan intended for Yazīd. He ordered that the employees be paid their share and welcomed any of them who wished to join him in his march to Kūfa. Along the way, a number of people, some of whom were on their way to Mecca for the *Ḥajj* pilgrimage, met with Husayn at various points between Mecca and Kūfa. Some of them joined Husayn's camp, and some advised Ḥusayn to avoid the 'Irāqis because of their untrustworthiness. Also, number of people who were themselves traveling towards Kūfa for various unrelated reasons joined Ḥusayn's caravan for purposes of security and convenience. At a stop called Tha'labīya, Ḥusayn heard from two travelers that Muslim b. 'Aqīl and his host Hāni' b. 'Urwa had been killed by 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād. He announced the news to the people traveling with him and made it clear that their future was to be full of bloodshed. That evening, all those who joined Ḥusayn for reasons other than supporting his cause against the Umayyads left his caravan. Only those who left Madīna and Mecca with him remained, along with a few dedicated converts such as the 'Uthmānī Zuhayr b. al-Qayn al-Bajalī. Meanwhile, Yazīd heard from Umayyad informants that Ḥusayn was on his way to Kūfa, and ordered 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād to deal with him accordingly. 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād set up a blockade on the

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outskirts of Kūfa, preventing Kūfans from leaving to join Ḥusayn's camp, and preventing Ḥusayn from entering Kūfa to lead further opposition to the Umayyads. Ḥusayn heard from some wandering bedouin, that there was a blockade around Kūfa, but they did not know why.

A short time later, one of the people in Ḥusayn's caravan screamed '*Allāhu Akbar!*' When Husayn asked why, he was told that it was because, after traveling so long in the barren desert they finally saw palm trees in the distance. But, when they looked carefully they noticed that they were not palms, but spears and horses. An army sent by 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād and led by Ḥurr b. Yazīd al-Riyāḥī approached Ḥusayn's camp, and Ḥusayn ordered his followers to race to a nearby area where they could put a hill at their backs as a defensive barrier. There, the army of Ḥurr b. Yazīd al-Riyāḥī confronted Ḥusayn and Ḥusayn ordered his followers to give water to the troops as well as to their animals. After the last animal was watered, Ḥusayn prepared to pray the noon prayer, and asked Ḥurr if he would rather lead his troops in their own prayer. Ḥurr declined and chose to pray behind Ḥusayn's prayer. Then, Ḥurr and his entire army prayed behind Ḥusayn as he led them in the noon prayer. After the prayer, Ḥusayn conferred with Ḥurr and discovered that Ḥurr had been ordered to rendezvous with Ḥusayn and bring him back to Kūfa to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, which Ḥusayn refused. Faced with the threat of having to kill Ḥusayn, but wishing to avoid any such violence, Ḥurr offered Ḥusayn the option of continuing along a path that led neither to Kūfa nor back to the Ḥijāz, while his

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army followed Ḥusayn's camp and kept it under close surveillance until 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād responded to a request for further instructions. After a short time, Ḥurr barred Ḥusayn from continuing any further, indicating that 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād had responded with orders to stop Ḥusayn on the spot, at a location with no access to shelter or water, and that he should tighten up on Ḥusayn. Ḥusayn set camp at Karbalā' and began preparations for battle.

Meanwhile, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād sought a Kūfan general to take charge as commander in chief of the army that was to slaughter Ḥusayn's band. After a variety of offers and threats, 'Umar b. Sa'd took charge and advanced towards Karbalā', with reinforcements being sent to him hourly. After some negotiation and some rhetorical wars of words between the two sides, and two days of obstructing Ḥusayn's camp from access to the water of the Euphrates, the army was finally instructed to attack on the evening of the ninth of Muḥarram. Ḥusayn made a formal request to delay the battle until the next morning, in order to give them a chance to pray and read the Qur'ān during the last night of their lives. Under pressure from the troops, who favored granting Ḥusayn his request, 'Umar b. Sa'd agreed. In the morning, on the day of the day of 'Āshūrā' (the tenth of Muḥarram) the battle itself took place, with all of Ḥusayn's companions giving their lives to protect him, and then his male family members doing the same, before finally Ḥusayn himself was killed by a massive onslaught, decapitated, and then trampled by horses.

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After Ḥusayn and his followers were killed, their belongings and those of their women were pillaged, and the women and children were marched to Kūfa. There, Zaynab and ʿAlī b. Ḥusayn took part in rhetorical rebuttals defending Ḥusayn's actions against arguments instigated by ʿUbaydullāh b. Ziyād. Afterwards they were marched to Yazīd at Damascus, and after similar rhetorical confrontations with Yazīd, the prisoners were marched back to their homes in Madīna, where they remained until after the rebellion of ʿAbdullāh b. Zubayr.

Sources

The following list of the early Islamic literary sources used for this study is arranged in chronological order by death date of the author/compiler, and a brief description of the information relevant to the battle of Karbalā' is provided, when appropriate. Those sources having unique characteristics in relation either to quantity or quality of information are noted, whereas some sources (particularly those later in the list) tend to rely heavily on their predecessors, making them sometimes less unique in both style and content. Nevertheless, even such late sources are critically analyzed for, although they may present the same information, the way in which the information is presented makes it an example of a new depiction or set of depictions of the events of the battle of Karbalā', or of the figures involved in the battle. Moreover, later sources sometimes provide additional information not found in earlier compilations. As we shall

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see, such variations in the sources' depictions often betray the authors' sectarian or political tendencies. In an attempt at a developmental analysis of depictions of the battle of Karbalā' in early Islamic history, this thesis will attempt a comprehensive study of each available depiction up to the Mongols' sack of Baghdad in 659/1258. Also, one post-Mongol invasion source representative of common Sunnī perceptions, and one of common Shī'ī perceptions will also be examined, as well as occasional references to a Safavid era source as an example of the final stage in the development of such depictions. A comprehensive analysis of the above mentioned sources, while placing their depictions and authorial tendencies in historical context, will provide a clearer developmental understanding of the way in which the battle of Karbalā' has been viewed throughout the early Islamic centuries.

A. The earliest dated source available on this topic is by the Zaydī al-Fadīl b. al-Zubayr b. 'Umar b. Dirham's (d. ca. 110-145 /728-762) *Tasmiyat man qutila ma'a al-Ḥusayn*[7], a manuscript of which was edited and published in the journal of Shī'ī cultural heritage, *Turāthunā*. The author was a Zaydī and a companion of the Shī'ī *imāms* Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Bāqir (d. 110/728) and Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq (d. 145/762). Although relative to later narrative and historical sources it may appear to be not much more than a listing of names, this manuscript is significant in that the author does

[7] Al-Faḍīl b. al-Zubayr, "Tasmiyat man qutila ma'a al-Ḥusayn," ed. Sayyid Muḥammad Riḍā al-Ḥusaynī, *Turāthunā* 2 (Spring 1985): 126-160. Henceforth: "Ibn al-Zubayr."

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occasionally include significant information as an aside. The fact that the author chooses to mention additional information about some figures rather than others speaks to the significance of those individuals in the author's own construction of his depiction of the events of Karbalā'. Moreover, the *Tasmiya* also includes a short section at the end dealing with the aftermath of the battle of Karbalā'. Furthermore, because of the early date of this source, it is essential in attempting a developmental understanding of the evolution of how Karbalā' was viewed in the early period of Islamic history.

B. The earliest source that would be expected to include a significant amount of narrative text is of Ibn Sa'd's (d. 230/845) *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*. Oddly enough, none of the popular printed editions have entries for either Ḥasan or Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.[8] No reasonable explanation has yet been found for this fact. Fortunately, a critical edition of the Ḥusayn entry of a manuscript of the work in Istanbul has been published by an Iranian scholar. [9] It is in this work that the issues of loyalty to the state, qualifications for leadership, and the tensions between 'Uthmānīs and 'Alids in the first Islamic century come up.

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[8] Including the Beirut edition (Beirut: Dar Bayrūt, 1957), the Tehran edition (Tehran: Mu'assese-ye Zamān, 1945), and others. A Saudi edition (Ṭā'if: Maktabat al-Ṣiddīq, 1993) had become available near the completion of this study, and comparison revealed that it uses the same Istanbul manuscript, and resulted in the same narrative text as the text edition used in this study (see next footnote).

[9] 'Abd al-Azīz Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Tarjumat al-Imām al-Ḥusayn wa maqtaluhu min al-qism al-ghayr maṭbū' min kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kubrā li Ibn Sa'd* (Qum: Mu'assissat Āl al-Bayt li Iḥyā' al-Turāth, 1989). Henceforth: "Ibn Sa'd."

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C. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī's (d. 256/869) *al-Tārikh al-kabīr*[10] includes a short paragraph on Ḥusayn, but it includes little more than his age at death, the date of his murder, and a few anecdotes.

D. Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Jābir al-Balādhurī's (d. 279/892) *Ansāb al-ashrāf*[11] seems to be the first source to present the information with a slightly pro-Shī'ī bent. The text is, like Ibn Sa'd's, a collection of *ḥadīth*s and *akhbār*, but arranged in a slightly more narrative style, with much of the Karbalā' narrative lacking *isnād*s.

E. Ahmad b. Dāwūd al-Dīnawarī's (d. 282/895) *al-Akhbār al-Tiwāl*[12] is the first source that tends to repeat some of the incidents within the narrative. This 'doubling' of certain aspects of the Karbalā' narratives is repeated by the authors of some later sources, apparently relying uncritically on Dīnawarī's rendition. The Karbalā' section in this source is significant, although it lacks any *isnād*s whatsoever) and the work as a whole is one very focused on opposition (particularly Shī'ī and 'Alid loyalist opposition) to the Umayyads.

F. Aḥmad b. Abī Ya'qūb b. Ja'far al-Ya'qūbī's (d. 284/897) *Tārīkh al-Ya'qūbī* has a slightly shorter section on Ḥusayn than that of al-Dīnawarī. The text is obviously

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[10] Ismā'īl b. Ibrāhīm al-Bukhārī, *al-Tārikh al-kabīr*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mu'īd Khān, v. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīya, n.d). Henceforth, "Bukhārī."

[11] Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, ed. Shaykh Muḥammad Bāqir al-Maḥmūdī, v. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Ta'āruf li al-Maṭbū'āt, 1977). Henceforth, "Balādhurī."

[12] Aḥmad b. Dāwūd al-Dīnawarī, *al-Akhbār al-tiwāl*, ed. 'Abd al-Mun'im 'Āmir, v. 1 (Cairo: Wizārat al-Thaqāfa wa al-Irshād al-Qawmī, 1960). Henceforth: "Dīnawarī."

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written in an *akhbārī* style, as there are no *isnāds* for the narrations.[13] The author's moderately Shī'ī tendencies show in his concern for the deaths of the Shī'ī *imāms*, of which Ḥusayn is perhaps the most celebrated example.

G. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dūlābī's (d.310/923) *al-Dhurrīya al-tāhira*[14] is primarily a collection of *ḥadīths* on Ḥusayn's piety, and on consciousness of the importance of honoring the *ahl al-bayt* of the Prophet, but also has a significant amount of information describing Ḥusayn and his character.

H. Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī's (d. 310/923) *Tārīkh al-rusul wa al-mulūk*[15] is the first truly lengthy piece, including many accounts, and often different versions of the same or similar accounts. Much of his Karbalā' material seems to be narrated from the Kūfan Abū Mikhnaf. Of all of these sources, Ṭabarī's is certainly the first to be so lengthy and detailed, and probably the most well known.

I. Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb b. Isḥāq al-Kulaynī's (d. 329/939) *al-Uṣūl al-kāfī*[16] is the first extant work to express a hardcore Shī'ī stance. It includes the first indication of

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[13] Aḥmad b. Abī Ya'qūb al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh Ya'qūbī,* v. 2 (Beirut: Dār Bayrut li al-Ṭabā'a wa al-Nashr, 1960). Henceforth: "Ya'qūbī."

[14] Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dūlābī, *al-Dhurrīya al-tāhira,* ed. Muḥammad Jawād al-Ḥusaynī al-Jalālī, (Beirut: al-Mu'assissa al-'Ilmīya li al-Matbū'āt, 1988). Henceforth: "Dūlābī."

[15] Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tarīkh al-rusul wa al- mulūk,* ed. Muḥammad Abū Faḍl Ibrāhīm, v. 5 (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif bi Misr, 1968). Henceforth: "Ṭabarī."

[16] Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb b. Isḥāq al-Kulaynī. *al-Usūl al-kāfī,* ed. 'Alī Akbar al-Ghifārī, v. 1 (Tehran: Maktabat al-Ṣadūq, 1961). Henceforth: "Kulaynī."

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an intense elaboration of Karbalā'-related rituals such as the *ziyāra* grave visitation ritual, as well as the first expressions of the Shī'ī concepts of *naṣṣ*, the *qā'im*, and intercession. Also, it is the first source to attribute the interpretations of certain Qur'ānic verses to being about Ḥusayn.

K. 'Alī b. Ḥusayn b. 'Alī al-Mas'ūdī's (d. 346/956) *Murūj al-dhahab wa ma'ādin al-jawāhir* [17] clearly expresses pro-'Abbāsid and pro-'Alid sympathies and is the first work to so clearly express anti-Mu'āwiya and anti-Yazīd tendencies.

L. Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī's (d. 356/967) *Maqātil al-ṭālibīyyīn*[18] is the first source that shows clear evidence of manipulating and reworking the text in an attempt to construct a cohesive story. It also includes moral qualifiers such as *la'anahullāh* (may God curse him) and *raḥimahullāh* (may God bless him) after the names of antagonists and protagonists, respectively. Much of the material is quoted from Ṭabarī and later quoted by Ibn al-Athīr. The section on the day of 'Āshūra' itself is notably fragmented, with much very clear cutting and pasting that was not smoothly edited by the author/compiler.

M. Sulaymān b. Ahmad b. Ayyūb b. Matīr al-Ṭabarānī's (d. 360/970) *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib* depicts a clear protagonist/antagonist scenario between

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[17] 'Alī b. Ḥusayn b. 'Alī al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab wa ma'ādin al-jawāhir*, v. 3 (Beirut: Dar al-Andalūs, 1965). Hencefoth: "Mas'ūdī."

[18] Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī. *Maqātil al-ṭālibīyyīn*, ed. Sayyid Ahmad Ṣaqr (Iran: Manshūrāt al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, 1993). Henceforth: "Iṣfahānī."

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Ḥusayn and Yazīd, as sources previous had done, but there are in this *maqtal*[19] stark differences between characterizations of Muʿāwiya as good ruler and Yazīd as bad one, unlike some of the pro-ʿAbbāsid or pro-Shīʿī sources that view all of the Umayyads in the same villainous light. This may be exemplary of a tendency in later Islamic historiography to look back at the period before Husayn's murder as the 'golden age' of righteous Muslim rulers who ruled by the Qurʾān and the *sunna*.

N. Qāḍī Nuʿmān b. Muḥammad b. al-Mansūr's (d. 365/975) *Sharḥ al-akhbār*[20] includes many notes by the author, and has numerous incidents of 'doubling' of certain parts of the Karbalāʾ narratives, as found previously in Dīnawarī's work. This is apparently also the first Ismāʿīlī source that appears in the literature, and adds an interesting perspective not only to the events of the battle of Karbalāʾ, but also to the characterizations of Ḥusayn and of his *ahl al-bayt*.

O. Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's (d. 463/1071) *Tārīkh Baghdād aw madīnat al-salām*[21] is textually quite sparse on Karbalāʾ, aside from a small amount of mostly anecdotal information. Nevertheless, the tone in this short section is

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[19] Sulaymān b. Ahmad b. Ayyūb al-Tabarānī, *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib*, ed. Muhammad Shujāʿ Dayfullāh (Kuwait: Dār al-Awrād li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzīʿ, 1992). Henceforth: "Ṭabarānī."

[20] Qāḍī Nuʿmān b. Muḥammad b. Manṣūr, *Sharh al-akhbār*, ed. Sayyid Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī al-Jalālī (Qum: Maṭbaʿat Sayyid al-Shuhadāʾ, 1983). Henceforth: "Qāḍī Nuʿmān."

[21] Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād aw madīnat al-salām*, v. 1 (Baghdād: al-Maṭbaʿa al-ʿArabīya, 1931). Henceforth: "Baghdādī."

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notably antagonistic towards Abū Bakr and 'Umar, while sympathetic to 'Alī. That is not to say that such is the case for the work as a whole, for he is known for his clearly Sunnī sympathies. Perhaps the 'Alid sympathies in this section stem from the source of the accounts.

P. Al-Muwaffaq b. Aḥmad al-Khwārazmī's (d. 568/1172) *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn*[22] is a strange mix of characteristics found in both early Sunnī and later Shī'ī sources on Karbalā'. It is also the earliest truly lengthy constructed piece on Karbalā' to have survived. The texts of parallels found in earlier sources are much lengthier in Khwārazmī's work, and conversations, letters, and sermons are all expanded disproportionately. There is also much more manipulation of earlier accounts and many instances of references to dreams and dream imagery. It is also the first instance of '*kāfir*izing' (labeling as heathen) of the enemies of Ḥusayn, and questioning the integrity of their Islam. It is full of anti-Umayyad *ḥadīth* reports, and makes both Yazīd and 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād seem absolutely evil. The early parts of the narratives are elaborately constructed, and the section on Ḥusayn's journey is somewhat fragmented. Like previous sources, this includes repetitions and 'doubling'. This work is the first of the Karbalā' narratives that is, like *Maqātil al-ṭālibīyyīn*, a clear construction, from beginning to end, but on a much grander scale unprecedented in the earlier literature on

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[22] Al-Muwaffaq b. Aḥmad al-Khwārazmī, *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn*, ed. Shaykh Muḥammad al-Samāwī, v. 1 (Qum: Maktabat al-Mufīd, n.d), v. 2 (Najaf: Maṭba'at al-Zahrā', 1948). Henceforth, "Khwārazmī."

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Karbalā'. It is interesting that a Ḥanafī scholar from Khwārazm wrote in the in the late 'Abbāsid era a *maqtal* more emotional and more powerful than all of what had been written previously by Shī'ī authors. As we shall see in the conclusion, though one may argue that such characteristics make the attribution of this work to Khwārazmī suspect, the circumstances and historical context of Khwārazmī and his work actually prove the opposite and are indicative of the tremendous effect of the Karbalā' narratives on later Sunnī perceptions of the events of that period.

Q. Abū al-Qāsim 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan b. Hibatullāh Ibn 'Āsākir's (d. 571/1176) *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq* [23] includes what seems to be every account that the author could get his hands on and is an extensive collection of *akhbār* (reports) about Ḥusayn himself, and the events of Karbalā'. This makes it very useful not only for depictions of the battle of Karbalā', but the large number of *akhbār* about Ḥusayn himself make it particularly useful for examining characterizations of Ḥusayn as well.

R. 'Izz al-Din Ibn al-Athīr's (d. 630/1233) *Usd al-ghāba fī ma'rifat al-ṣahāba* [24] contains a rather short biography of Ḥusayn. This is not unexpected, as the author intended the work to be of use not to historians, but to scholars of *ḥadīth*s (sayings of the

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[23] Abū-l Qāsim 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq,* ed. Muḥibb al-Dīn 'Umar al-'Amrāwī, v. 14 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1995). Henceforth: "Ibn 'Asākir."

[24] 'Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba fī ma'rifat al-ṣahāba,* ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Bannā, Moḥammad Aḥmad 'Āshūr, and Mahmūd 'Abd al-Wahhāb Fāyiḍ, v. 2 (Beirut: Dār Ihyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1970). Henceforth: "Usd al-ghāba."

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Prophet) concerned with scrutinizing the veracity of an individual and his capacity to transmit narrations reliably.

S. 'Izz al-Din Ibn al-Athīr's (d. 630/1233) *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh* [25] provides a more narrative version of Ḥusayn's life and the events of Karbalā'. Unlike the previous work by the same author, *al-Kāmil* was intended to provide historical information, and it relies quite heavily on Ibn Sa'd's narrative.

T. 'Alī b. Mūsā b. Muhammad Ibn Ṭāwūs's (d. 664/1265) a*l-Luhūf fī qutlā al-ṭufūf*[26] is in some sections very, very brief, while in others the selections are quite lengthy. This tendency shows not only which subjects the author had much source material to rely on, but also which subjects the author himself was concerned with, and which were deemed by him to be not as important. This source also uses *la'na* curses for Umayyad figures, and the characterization of Yazīd as absolutely evil betrays the author's clearly pro-Shī'ī biases.

U. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. 'Uthmān al-Dhahabī's (d. 748/1348) *Sīyar a'lām al-nubalā'* [27] has two biographies: one for Ḥusayn b. 'Alī and another for Ḥusayn *al-Shahīd.* It is the first example of the concept of Ḥusayn as a martyr appearing

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[25] 'Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh,* ed. Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Daqqāq, v. 4 (Beirut: Dār Bayrūt li al-Ṭibā'a wa al- Nashr, 1965). Henceforth: "al-Kāmil."

[26] 'Alī b. Mūsā b. Muḥammad Ibn Ṭāwūs, a*l-Luhūf fī qutlā al-ṭufūf* (Qum: Manshūrāt al-Maktaba al-Dāwuri, n.d.). Henceforth: "Ibn Ṭāwūs."

[27] Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. 'Uthmān al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a'lām al-Nubalā',* ed. Shu'ayb al-Arnūṭ, v. 3 (Beirut: Mu'assissat al-Risāla, 1982). Henceforth: "Sīyar a'lām."

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in Sunnī depictions. Towards the end of the narrative the chronology begins to lose its structure, and some of the narrations become fragmented, going back and forth in time. In particular, the description of the events of the day of 'Āshūrā' at the end is clearly a cut and paste of many earlier sources, going back and forth in time, and not edited very well.

V. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. 'Uthmān al-Dhahabī's (d. 748/1348) *Tārīkh al-Islām wa wafayāt al-mashāhīr wa al-a'lām* [28] is very much like the author's other work, *Sīyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, for obvious reasons. However, in *Tārīkh al-Islām*, not only the chronology is inconsistent with the author's other work. It confuses the chronology of events between 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubayr's rebellion and the battle of Karbalā'.

W. Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī's (d. 852/1449) *al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-ṣahāba* [29] is, like Ibn al-Athīr's *Usd al-ghāba fī ma'rifat al-ṣahāba*, intentionally brief, providing only the essential biographical information on Ḥusayn as necessary to determine his status in *ḥadīth* transmission.

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[28] Shams al-Din Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. 'Uthmān al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām wa wafayāt al-mashāhīr wa al-a'lām,* ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām al-Tadmurī, vols. 4-5 (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1989). Henceforth: "Tārīkh al-Islām." Note that the original volumes are not numbered by the publisher. The biographies of Ḥusayn are included in the volumes dealing with the years 41-60 AH, and 61-80 AH, which will be referred to as volumes 4 and 5, respectively, as per their sequence in the series.

[29] Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-ṣahāba*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī, v. 2 (Cairo: Dār Nahḍat Miṣr, 1970). Henceforth: "Ibn Ḥajar."

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X. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī's (d.1111/1698) *Biḥār al-anwār* [30] is a comprehensive encyclopedia of Shī'īsm compiled during the Safavid era. It contains a wealth of information on the development of Karbalā'-related rituals and is the prime example of the narrative depictions that support extreme Shī'ī views of Ḥusayn and the battle of Karbalā' which are, for the most part, accepted among Twelver Shī'ī communities internationally to this day. In a sense, the accounts depicting Ḥusayn and the battle of Karbalā' in this source serve as examples of the final stage in the development of depictions of the battle of Karbalā' in Islamic history. Nevertheless, this particular source will not be analyzed as deeply as the other sources, for a number of reasons, the most important of which is that this thesis is concerned with depictions of the battle of Karbalā' in *early* Islamic history. Moreover, because of its encyclopedic nature, numerous sources (some of which are no longer extant) were used in its compilation, and an analysis of the depictions of Karbalā' in Majlisī's work could become a dissertation in itself. However, in spite of its late date of compilation, and its encyclopedic nature, occasional references will be made to Majlisī's work merely for the purposes of comparison, and for identifying the final stage in the development of perceptions of Karbalā', by which time those perceptions had already crystallized and formed the community that is today's Twelver Shī'īs.

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[30] Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār,* vols. 44-45 (Tehran: Manshūrāt al-Maktabah al-Islāmīya, 1969). Henceforth: "Majlisī."

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CHAPTER 2

PIETY/GENEALOGY CONSCIOUSNESS IN EARLY ISLAM

One of the themes that appears to come up recurrently in these sources is that of a prevailing attitude of what shall be referred to here as 'piety consciousness' and closeness to the Prophet. Despite the fact that the concept of '*ṣahābī*'-ness (the concept of what it means to have been a companion of the Prophet) does not appear to have crystallized in literary sources until well into the second Islamic century, [1] the concept of piety consciousness may still be used as a instrument with which depictions of the battle of Karbalā' can be understood. The term piety-consciousness will be used here not to refer to the second-century phenomenon of crystallization of the concept of *ṣahāba*, but to the gradual awareness, generation after generation, of temporal distance from the Prophet after his death, and to one of the apparent results of this awareness: an increasing respect (and, as more time elapsed, almost reverence) for those individuals in the society who were more closely related to the Prophet than others were, either by kinship, by having interacted with the Prophet, by emulating certain aspects of the Prophet's ideally pietistic Islamic character, or even by exemplary deeds and going beyond the call of duty, as in

[1] This is in large part due to its relation to developments in *ḥadīth* (sayings of the Prophet) literature at the time. See Donner, *Narratives*, 43.

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cases of extreme piety, or self-sacrifice in *jihād* (struggle in holy war). Although the earliest literary sources including narratives of the battle are all products of the second and third Islamic centuries, an understanding of the awareness in early Islamic society of the notion of piety consciousness is essential in understanding the world-view of Muslims in early Islam, including the participants in the events of Karbalā', those who later narrated accounts of the battle orally, as well as the authors/compilers who first recorded the oral accounts in the literary sources. As Donner notes,

> The strong concern for piety and morals visible in the Qur'ān, ... evidence of the values prevailing in the earliest community of Believers, did not die out in the period following the death of Muhammad and the codification of the Qur'ān. Rather, the preoccupation with piety survived among the Believers, as can be seen clearly in both the available documentary evidence from the first century AH – inscriptions, papyri, etc. – and in the earliest non-Qur'ānic literary evidence from the Islamic tradition, which seems to have its roots in this period.[2]

A number of such examples occur in the selected sources, including references to several figures playing key roles in the Karbalā' narratives, such as Burayr b. Ḥuḍayr al-Hamdānī, Muslim b. 'Awsaja, and Zuhayr b. al-Qayn al-Bajalī. In addition, the specific attention paid by both Sunnī and Shī'ī sources to Zuhayr's well-known stance as an 'Uthmānī (one who believed that 'Uthmān was unjustly murdered) as opposed to the 'Alid loyalists, speaks to the importance of such stances in the political atmosphere of early Islam, and of the polarization of the two political camps by the time of the appearance of the earliest sources. In fact, there are numerous references to 'Uthmān

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[2] Ibid., 85.

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himself and to his murder that appear at some of the most unexpected points in the Karbalā' narratives, indicating that the murder of 'Uthmān, which occurred nearly thirty years prior to the battle of Karbalā', was still fresh in the minds of Muslims narrating and compiling these accounts. Finally, in the midst of all of the other examples, both Sunnī and Shī'ī sources include numerous references to the prevailing aura of piety and genealogy consciousness that surrounded Ḥusayn himself, as expressed not only in his direct lineage to the Prophet, but also in his piety and exemplary Islamic behavior, including some strategically political actions that replicate almost exactly those of his grandfather, the Prophet, and his father, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. It is precisely this awareness of his closeness to the Prophet that the narrators and compilers seem to have used to explain why some of Ḥusayn's own companions may have chosen to fight and die for his cause, and why others who were against his cause may have chosen to convert to it.

Burayr al-Hamdānī, Muslim b. 'Awsaja, and Zuhayr b. al-Qayn

Among the older followers of Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib was Burayr b. Ḥuḍayr al-Hamdānī, who was apparently known by the epithet *sayyid al-qurrā'* (leader of the Qur'ān reciters),[3] and Muslim b. 'Awsaja. As we shall see, references to both Burayr and Muslim b. 'Awsaja appear in the same series of sources, and come up repeatedly at the same place in the Karbalā' narratives. It is always during the final battle at Karbalā', on

[3] See Norman Calder, "The Qurrā' and the Arabic Lexicographical Tradition." *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 36 (1991): 297-307.

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the day of 'Āshūrā', and the awareness of their closeness to the Prophet, either in reality or by virtue of their exemplary Islamic behavior, is most apparent in the aftermath of their fighting. In the case of Burayr, for example, the sources show that when he challenges the enemy troops to engage in a *mubāhala* (invocation of divine intervention causing the death of the unbeliever),[4] just as the Prophet himself challenged the Christians of Najrān, he won over his opponents but was then surrounded and overwhelmed by a second attacker.[5] Not only the depiction of his victory, but his extreme piety, and his position as a transmitter of the Qur'ān all serve to grant Burayr the honorific position of 'pious'. As noted by Donner, the status of early Muslims "within the community was established solely by their piety – which may have included their perceived knowledge of the Qur'ān and their success in living in accordance with its precepts, and in accordance with less well-articulated, but widely understood and accepted, norms of pious behavior."[6] In the Karbalā' sources, when the killer of Burayr boasted of his triumph and attempted to reap his reward he was reproached by a number of figures who indicated that it was no honor to have killed the *sayyid al-qurrā'*, one of the greatest reciters and transmitters of the

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[4] A challenge for two parties to meet at a designated place and time (in this case, on the battlefield immediately) and both pray for God to destroy the wrongdoer, while allowing the believer to live. In a sense, God is the arbiter, and the victor will have been chosen by God.

[5] Balādhurī, 191 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 432-3 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Yūsuf b. Yazīd ← 'Afīf b. Zuhayr b. Abī al-Akhnas); Khwārazmī, 2:12 (←Abū Mikhnaf); al-Kāmil, 66-7 (n.i.); Majlisī, 45:15 (← Ibn al-Athīr).

[6] Donner, *Narratives*, 99.

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Qur'ān. These reproaches are an indication of the awareness in the early Islamic community, even if only at the time of the compilation of the account, of an aura of holiness that surrounded the extremely pious. In the case of Burayr, not only was it noted that he was a companion of the Prophet, but his closeness to the Prophet is even more significant in light of the fact that he was viewed as one of the leading figures in oral transmission of the Qur'ān.

Muslim b. 'Awsaja also seems to be endowed by the sources with a similar aura of closeness to the Prophet, but in a rather different respect. Unlike Burayr's position as a respected transmitter of the Qur'ān, Muslim b. 'Awsaja seems to have been respected not only for being a companion, but also for his dedication to spreading Islam and fighting the *jihād* against infidels. Again, during narration of the events of the final battle on the day of 'Āshūrā', the sources[7] show Muslim b. 'Awsaja as fighting bravely, being killed, and then his killer being reproached by one of the older and more experienced soldiers in the Umayyad army. This time, however, mention is made not of Muslim b. 'Awsaja's abilities to memorize and recite the Qur'ān, but of his dedication to Islamic principles of *jihād*, and of his bravery at battles against infidels in Azerbaijān, where he 'continued fighting until after even the horses grew weary'. In this way, the sources' stress on the depiction of both Burayr and Muslim b. 'Awsaja as pious companions of the Prophet try

[7] Balādhurī, 193 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 436 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Ḥusayn b. 'Uqba al-Murādī ← al-Zubaydī); Khwārazmī, 2:16 (← Abū Mikhnaf); al-Kāmil, 68 (n.i.); Majlisī, 45:20 (← Muḥammad b. Abī Ṭālib).

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to convince us that there existed a prevailing attitude of respect for those close to the Prophet and a consciousness of their being pious exemplary Muslims. Nevertheless, even if not contemporaneous with the battle of Karbalā', the early sources' stress on such depictions, as well as the inclusion of critical interjections by members of the Umayyad army against the killing of such 'pious' companions of Ḥusayn clearly also served the polemical interests of the early Muslim historians of the 'Abbāsid period.

Another such example is that of Zuhayr b. al-Qayn al-Bajalī, who was a companion and ardent supporter of 'Uthmān. Zuhayr is depicted as having been in Mecca during the same *Ḥajj* season that Husayn was in Mecca, just prior to going to Karbalā', but avoiding Ḥusayn's caravan on his return trip back to 'Irāq. During the return trip Ḥusayn is portrayed as having met with Zuhayr at one of the oases along the way and converting Zuhayr to his cause. Not only that, but he became one of Ḥusayn's most ardent supporters, and perhaps the most eager of them to start fighting. Unlike Burayr and Muslim b. 'Awsaja, whose characterizations as pious companions of the Prophet are most apparent only in narrations of the events of the final battle on the day of 'Āshūrā', the sources provide a glimpse of how Zuhayr was viewed in relation to other companions not only during the final battle, but also on occasions before the battle. All of the sources show him as being a *ṣaḥābī*, but some [8] mention this when describing his

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[8] Balādhurī, 167 (n.i.), 225 (← Sa'īd b. Sulaymān ← 'Abbād b. al-'Awām ← Ḥuṣayn); Dīnawarī, 246 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 396 (Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Ṣaddī ← *rajul min Fazāra*); Khwārazmī, 225 (Aḥmad b. A'tham); al-Kāmil, 42 (n.i.); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 30 (al-Mufīd, ← *rāwī* ← Ja'far al-Ṣādiq ← *jamā'a min banī Fazāra wa Bajīla*); Majlisī,

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conversion after meeting with Ḥusayn at an oasis during the trip returning from the *Ḥajj* pilgrimage, while some of these[9] also mention it within the context of the final battle at Karbalā', when members of the attacking army asked him such things as, "Zuhayr, what are you doing with Ḥusayn? You are an 'Uthmānī!" As with previous examples, that of Zuhayr appears to serve a clearly polemical purpose, providing a dramatic encounter, which results in the implication that those opposing Ḥusayn are ignorant of the facts, or misled by Umayyad propaganda.

Interestingly, however, a number of later sources including Khwārazmī's *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn* mention that upon his conversion Zuhayr explained that he heard Salmān al-Fārisī tell him long before Karbalā' that if Ḥusayn were ever in trouble, he should join Ḥusayn and fight by his side. Being that such references begin to appear only during the Būyid period and continue after it, these may be the first indications of an 'Iranization' of the Karbalā' narrative by attribution of more narrative credit to Salmān, a Persian, as opposed to other companions.[10] In fact, a close look at the Shī'ī sources after Khwārazmī's shows that they even neglect to mention Zuhayr's 'Uthmānī political stance

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Mufīd ← *jamā'a min banī Fazāra wa Bajīla*).

[9] Balādhurī, 184 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 417 (Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Ḥārith b. Ḥaṣīra ← 'Abdullāh b. Sharīk al-'Āmirī); Khwārazmī, 250 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham).

[10] Another fact that supports this hypothesis is that, beginning in the Būyid period, sources begin to include references to an alleged wife of Ḥusayn, Shahrbānū, which means "Queen" or "Princess" in Persian. Ḥusayn allegedly married her after the conquest of Persia and, unable to face the humiliation of being taken captive, she is portrayed as having suicidally thrown herself into the Euphrates as she was being marched to Kūfa with the captive women. See: Majlisī, 45:62 (← Ibn Shahrāshūb).

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altogether. [11] After all, how can such a brave and faithful supporter of the Shī'īs' third *imām* have been an 'Uthmānī? Apparently, the concept defied post-Būyid Shī'ī logic.

In all these cases, those of Burayr al-Hamdānī, Muslim b. 'Awsaja, and Zuhayr b. al-Qayn, the sources' depictions of their extreme piety, their willingness for self-sacrifice, and even temporal closeness to the Prophet, among the companions of Ḥusayn (whether or not historical reality) certainly served the narrators and compilers of the early Islamic period in constructing depictions portraying a prevailing aura of piety consciousness among the early Muslims at Karbalā'. In these cases, as with the example of Zuhayr, such depictions of piety consciousness seem to serve a clearly polemical purpose, and, in depicting the dramatic conversion experience of an 'Uthmānī, seem to legitimize metaphorically Ḥusayn's 'Alid movement, even in the eyes of the 'Alids' 'Uthmānī enemies.

'Uthmān

Even more so than the references to these companions who chose to fight and die for Ḥusayn, references to 'Uthmān himself come up repeatedly in the narratives dealing with the battle of Karbalā'. In fact, they come up so conspicuously often that it is rather difficult to ignore their significance. This is even more the case when we place both the

[11] Ibn al-Athīr's *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh* is a Sunnī source that does mention that Zuhayr was 'Uthmānī, in addition to this new reference to Salmān. Post-Būyid Shī'ī sources, however, tend to mention Salmān, but neglect to mention 'Uthmān.

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battle of Karbalā' and the murder of 'Uthmān in historical context and examine their relation to each other. Although the two events were nearly three decades apart, those three decades were a period during which the fledgling Islamic state experienced great and pervasive changes in all respects. With regard to the era just prior to the murder of 'Uthmān, these included, among other things, accession of new territories and extension of political boundaries, sudden and massive influxes of new wealth in booty and taxes, population shifts among and between tribes, urban centers, and nomadic hinterlands, major changes in the demographics of the urban centers of the early Islamic state, and thorough restructuring of government administration.[12] In addition, there was a period of political instability just prior to the murder of 'Uthmān, when issues of the qualifications for leadership, and the personal character of the leader resurfaced in the consciousness of the early Islamic community. Surprisingly, a careful analysis of the historical context of the battle of Karbalā' reveals a number of striking similarities. In fact, all of the same factors (territorial expansion, influxes of wealth, demographic changes, and political restructuring) were not only evident during Mu'āwiya's reign just prior to the battle of Karbalā', but were also evident on a much grander scale. The continuing Islamic conquests were fast approaching Spain in the West and India in the East, and wealth flooded the coffers of the central treasury in unprecedented quantities. New Islamic urban centers were being founded, and the populations in already existing ones were

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[12] See Fred M. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), 221-45; Hodgson, 1:187-230.

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increasing. The government was becoming increasingly more centralized, and a standing army was replacing older and more traditional tribal military organization and tactics. [13] These factors, in addition to the death of the leader, the first hereditary transition of power in the Islamic state, and the fact that there was a significant population of unruly 'Alid loyalists and others, resulted in a situation that was ripe for Ḥusayn's challenging the leadership of Yazīd, and the eventual, almost inevitable, deaths of Ḥusayn and his supporters. Clearly, although the two specific events were themselves very different, the circumstances that led up to both the murder of 'Uthmān and the battle of Karbalā' were very similar. In fact, the historical context of the events that led up to the battle of Karbalā' is an almost exact reproduction of those that led to the murder of 'Uthmān, the only difference being one of scale. As we shall see, the growth of the early Islamic state geographically, economically, and politically during the three decades between the two events led to much more intense economic, political, and military activity with regard to Ḥusayn at Karbalā'.

Yet, in spite of all of these changes in the three decades that elapsed between the murder of 'Uthmān and the battle of Karbalā', the murder of 'Uthmān itself was clearly such a defining moment in the consciousness of the Muslim community of the first Islamic century that consciousness of 'Uthmān as a pious companion, and the memory of his murder are themes prevalent in even the earliest narrative sources dealing with Islamic

[13] See Hodgson, 1:200-240; Hawting, 34-40; Kennedy, 82-90.

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history in general, and the battle of Karbalā' in particular. [14] Although one might argue that the fact that these sources mention the murder of 'Uthmān is more a sign of the concerns of the authors of the sources rather than a sign of the concern of the actual figures present at Karbalā', it seems quite clear that such is not the case. Whereas some recurrent themes or concerns are obviously retrospective authorial constructions created much later and inserted into the narratives of later sources,[15] the nature of the references to 'Uthmān, their placement within the narratives, and the consistency of their appearance in the earliest of the series of narratives all tend to lead one to the conclusion that these were actually references in the original narrations and not later constructions.

The majority of these piety conscious references to 'Uthmān can be divided into three major groups: those that occur at a point in the narrative before the battle of Karbalā', those that occur at Karbalā', and those that occur after the battle, at Madīna, when the news of the brutal slaying of Ḥusayn reached the Madinese community.[16] In addition, there are a few isolated references that deal with Ḥusayn indirectly, yet serve as further examples that clarify the nature of 'Uthmānī versus 'Alid loyalty in the first Islamic century. Of the references that occur at points in the narratives prior to Ḥusayn's arrival

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[14] See Donner, *Narratives,* on *fitna* themes, 184-190.

[15] Such as the attribution Salmān the Persian to be the cause of Zuhayr's converting from being an 'Uthmānī to fighting for Ḥusayn, as well as the references to Shahrbānū, Ḥusayn's wife of Persian royalty, mentioned earlier (see note 42).

[16] Or, in some instances, the Kūfan community.

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at Karbalā', the vast majority appear during a conversation in Mecca between 'Abdullāh b. 'Abbās and Ḥusayn b. 'Alī. [17] In this conversation 'Abdullāh b. 'Abbās attempted to dissuade Ḥusayn from going to Kūfa, whose citizens, after having heard of the death of Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān and of Ḥusayn's refusal to give allegiance to Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya, had written many thousands of letters giving allegiance to Ḥusayn and inviting him to come to Kūfa to be their leader. In the course of this conversation, Ibn 'Abbās failed to dissuade Ḥusayn from proceeding into a death trap, even after numerous pleas and calls to reason. Finally, after realizing that Ḥusayn's mind could not be changed, Ibn 'Abbās urged Ḥusayn at least not to take his women and children with him to Kūfa, "so that they do not helplessly watch you die the way that 'Uthmān's women and children watched him die." [18] And, of the references to 'Uthmān that occur at a point in the

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[17] There is one rather odd reference in Khwārazmī, 180 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham), where Yazīd b. Mu'āwīya, in his letter ordering Walīd, his governor at Madīna, to force Ḥusayn to give the oath of allegiance to Yazīd, and if he refuses, to kill him just as 'Uthmān was unjustly killed. This, however, does not seem to be an example of *ṣahābī*-consciousness within the narration, Rather, just as with the case of the retrospective Iranization of Zuhayr's conversion by attributing the cause to be Salmān the Persian, seems to be a later construction. Aside from the dubious way in which the reference is phrased, no such reference is mentioned in any of the ten sources prior to Khwārazmī's, even though the same letter by Yazīd to Walīd is mentioned.

[18] Ibn Sa'd, 60 (← Ibn Sa'd *isnād* chart, henceforth, "IS", see fig. 1); Dīnawarī, 244 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 384 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Ḥārith b. Ka'b al-Wālibī ← 'Uqba b. Sum'ān); Mas'ūdī, 55 (n.i.); Isfahānī, 110 (n.i.); Khwārazmī, 216-17 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); Ibn 'Asākir, 211 (← 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Zinād ← Abū Wajza al-Sa'dī ← 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, and also includes Ibn Sa'd *isnād* sequence); al-Kāmil, 39 (n.i.); Siyar a'lām, 297 (← Ibn Sa'd ← al-Wāqidī ← Ibn Abī Dhi'b ← 'Abdullāh b. 'Umayr, and ← Ibn Abī Zinād ← Abū Wajza, and ← Yūnus b. Abī Isḥāq ← Abū Isḥāq ← *wa sammā ṭā'ifa*) henceforth, "SA-IS", see fig. 2); Tārīkh al-Islam, 5:9 (n.i., but he relies on Ibn Sa'd ← al-Wāqidī for other accounts).

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narratives after Ḥusayn has arrived at Karbalā', most appear in the context of a letter from 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, Yazīd's governor at Kūfa, to 'Umar b. Sa'd, the general of Yazīd's troops at Karbalā', ordering him to prevent Ḥusayn's camp from access to the water of the Euphrates river. It is in the text of this letter, as transmitted in the sources, that 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād gave his general orders, and commented that "Ḥusayn must die thirsty just as 'Uthmān did." [19] Another example of references to 'Uthmān at this particular time frame within the context of the narratives is an instance during the battle when one challenger came toward Ḥusayn's camp and said "I am with 'Uthmān," to which a member of Ḥusayn's camp shouts the response, "you are with Shayṭān!" [20]

In addition to these examples, a great number of the piety-conscious references to 'Uthmān occur in the portions of the narratives dealing with the aftermath of the battle of Karbalā'. Most of these, particularly in the earlier sources, appear when Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya sent the head of Ḥusayn to Madīna and ordered his governor there, 'Amr b. Sa'īd b. 'Ās to announce the news to the rebellious Madinese so that they give their allegiance to Yazīd. It is at this point in the narratives that either 'Amr himself, or, in

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[19] Balādhurī, 180 (n.i.); Majlisī, 44: 315, 318 (← al-Ṣadūq ← Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Baghdādī ← al-Ḥasan b. 'Uthmān b. Zīyād al-Tustarī ← Ibnrāhīm b. 'Abdullāh b. Mūsā b. Yūnus b. Abī Isḥāq al-Subay'ī ← his aunt Marīsa d. Mūsā b.Yūnus b. Abī Isḥāq ← her aunt Ṣafīya d. Yūnus b. Abī Isḥāq ← Bahja d. al-Ḥārith b. 'Abdullāh al-Ta'labī ← her uncle 'Abdullāh b. Manṣūr ← Ja'far ← Muḥammad ← 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn), 388 (← Muḥammad b. Abī Ṭālib), 389 (← al-Mufīd).

[20] Ṭabarī, 435 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Naḍr b. Sālim Abū Zuhayr al-'Absī); Khwārazmī, 2:15 (← al-Sarkhaskī); Majlisī, 45:19 (← Muḥammad b. Abī Ṭālib and al-Mufīd).

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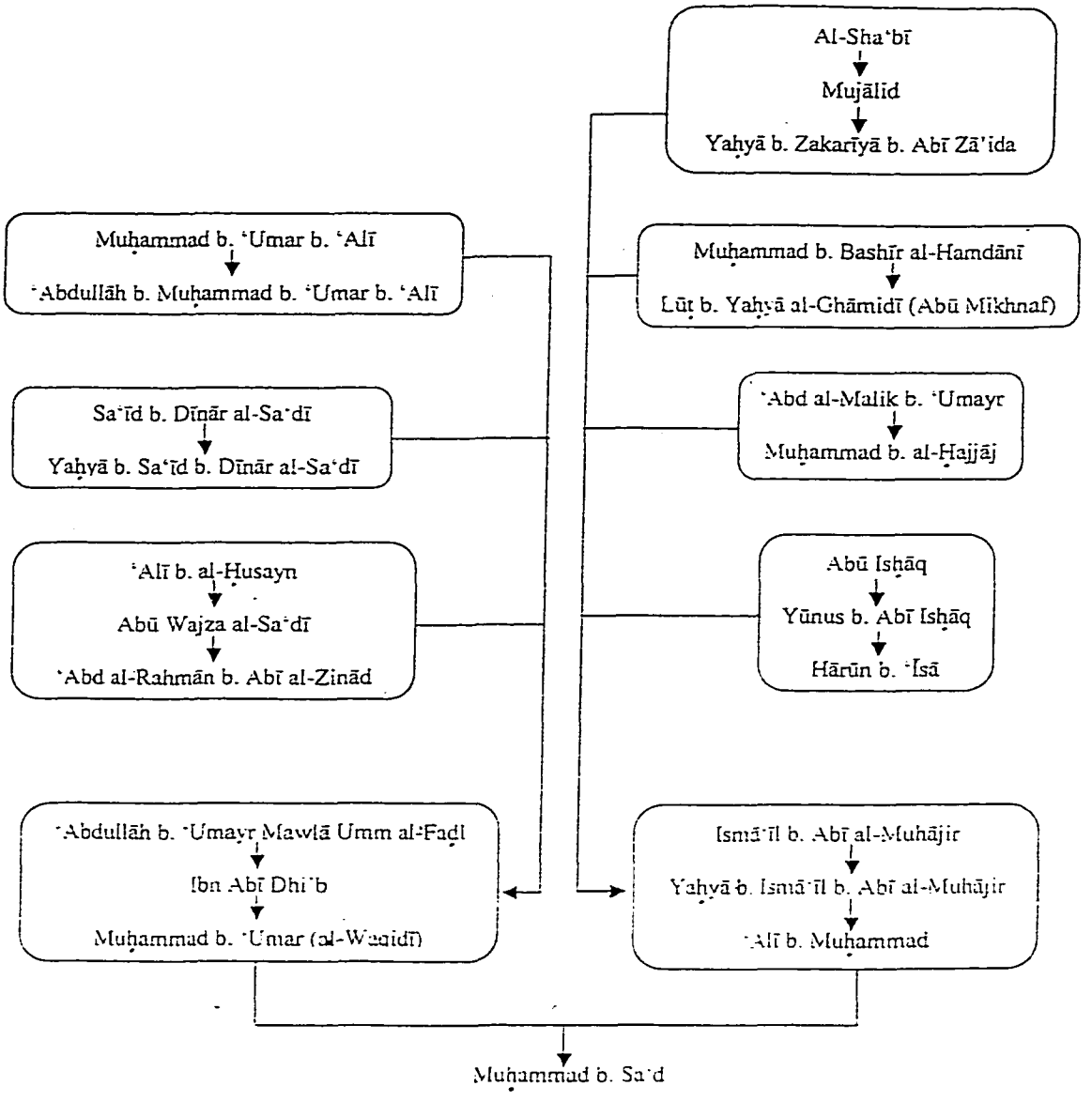

Fig. 1. Ibn Sa'd's combined *isnād* ("IS"), see footnote 18 and pp. 48-57.

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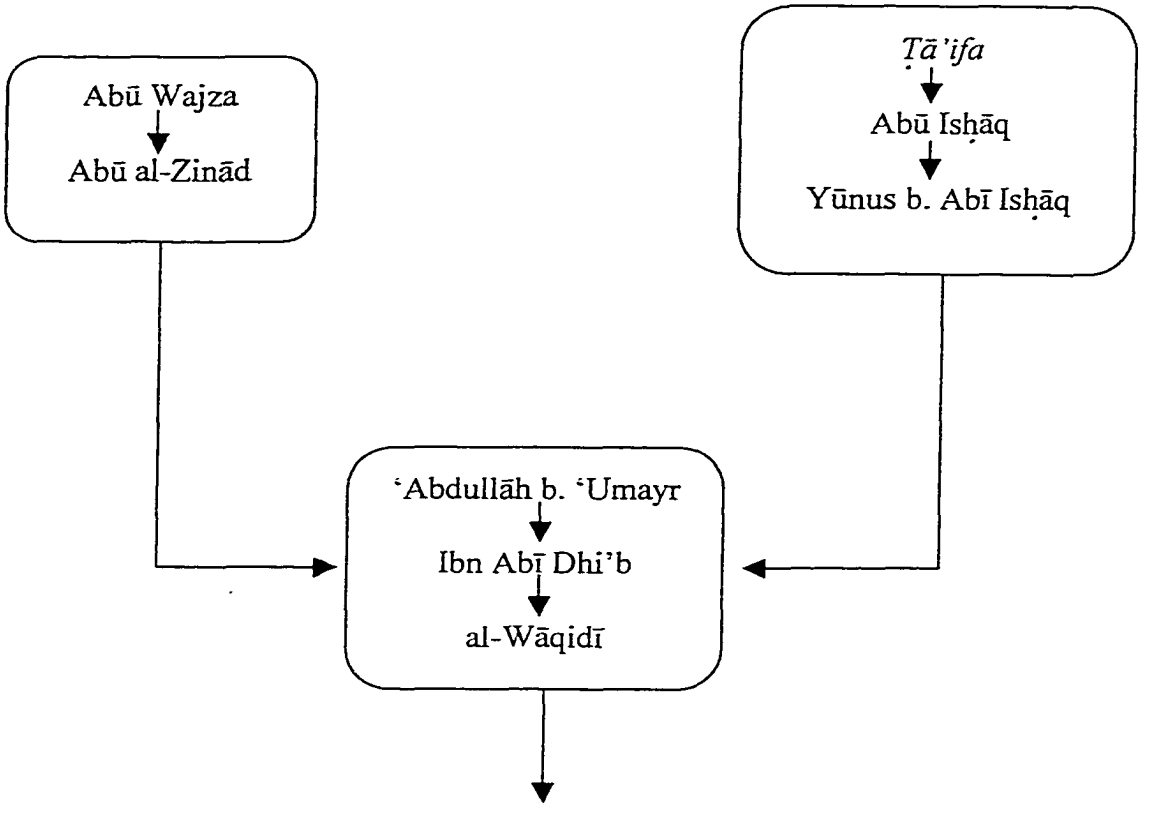

al-Dhahabī's *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*

Fig. 2. Siyar a'lam- Ibn Sa'd combined *isnād*, "SA-IS", see footnote 18 and pp. 48-57.

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some accounts, someone else, mentioned that the people's reaction to the news of the killing of Ḥusayn reminded him "of the wailing in the days of 'Uthmān." [21]

Interestingly, this part of the narrative is reworked in later Shī'ī sources in order to avoid any mention of 'Uthmān, just as they neglect to mention the reports that Ḥusayn's converted companion, Zuhayr, was an 'Uthmānī. For example, in order to avoid any mention of 'Uthmān altogether, the reference was reconfigured to read something such as, "there was no wailing like the wailing of that day," [22] and this reference is adopted by Majlisī. In fact, these are examples of how the piety consciousness of 'Uthmān was so prevalent that later Shī'ī sources attempted to 'extract' it from the literary tradition of which it had become such an integral part.

There are, however, a number of instances where early narrations appearing in Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt* of an 'Uthmānī fighting alongside 'Alī at Ṣiffīn slip into later works that otherwise seem to have pro-Shī'ī leanings. [23] If this is the case, it may indicate a relative date for the beginnings of official condemnation of the first three rightly guided caliphs

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[21] With some minor textual variations, Ibn Sa'd, 85 (← IS); Balādhurī, 217 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 466 (← Hishām ← 'Awāna b. al-Ḥakam); al-Kāmil, 80 (n.i.); Majlisī, 45:122 (← al-Mufīd).

[22] Ibn Ṭāwūs, 66, 71, 83 (n.i.); Majlisī, 45:112, 122 (← al-Mufīd).

[23] Ibn Sa'd, 49 (← Yaḥyā b. Ḥammād ← Abū 'Awāna ← 'Aṭā' b. al-Sā'ib ← Maymūn ← Shaybān b. Mukhram); Ṭabarānī, 51 (Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh al-Ḥaḍramī ← Ibn Yaḥyā b. Abī Samīna ← Yaḥyā b. Ḥammād ← Abū 'Awāna ← 'Aṭā' b. al-Sā'ib ← Maymūn b. Mahrān ← Shaybān b. Muḥazzam); Khwārazmī, 2:55 (n.i.); Ibn Asākir, 221-2 (← Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Bāqī ← al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī ← Muḥammad b. al-'Abbās ← Aḥmad b. Ma'rūf ← al-Ḥusayn b. Fahm ← Muḥammad b. Sa'd ← Yaḥyā b. Ḥammād ← Abū 'Awāna ← 'Aṭā' b. al-Sā'ib ← Maymūn ← Shaybān b. Mukhram).

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among Twelver Shī'ī scholarhip. However, it is important to note that these may be isolated instances that 'slipped through the cracks' of the editorial process. Or, it is possible that authors such as Khwārazmī, who were themselves Sunnī, may have included them deliberately, not regarding an 'Uthmānī political stance as any shame. This latter view may be more appropriate, considering that the only sources to thoroughly edit out such material were the 'truly' Shī'ī sources, and not merely early sources with 'pro-Shī'ī tendencies'.

Nevertheless, in addition to these references placed consistently throughout the narratives of the battle of Karbalā', there are a few isolated examples of obscure references to 'Uthmān, all of which appear only in later Shī'ī sources. For example, there is a reference to Fāṭima d. Ḥusayn holding a bloody shirt,[24] reminiscent of the famous scene of Mu'āwiya holding the bloody shirt of 'Uthmān and demanding that the perpetrators be brought to justice, and a quote of Abū al-Dharr making an indirect reference to Ḥusayn being killed like a caliph.[25] The first example is clearly a piety conscious reference to 'Uthmān, but without referring to him directly, and the second seems to be another example of a later Shī'ī author's antagonism towards 'Uthmān. As with the previous example of "the wailing of the days of 'Uthmān" being changed to "no

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[24] Majlisī, 45:196 (n.i.).

[25] Majlisī, 45:219 (← Ibn Qawlawayh ← Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh b. 'Alī al-Nāqid ← 'Abd al-Raḥmān al- Aslamī ← 'Abdullāh b. al-Ḥusayn ← 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr ← Abū al-Dharr al-Ghifārī).

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wailing like that day," assuming that the entire account is not a complete fabrication, it is possible that an earlier version of Abū al-Dharr's statement may have read "Ḥusayn will be killed like 'Uthmān" but could have been changed by a Shī'ī redactor to "killed like a caliph." This trend by later Shī'īs of transmitting narrations without dignifying 'Uthmān by even mentioning his name is a phenomenon that is not only interesting in itself, but it is also interesting in that it proves the existence of an earlier piety consciousness that such transmitters wished to ignore or eradicate. The piety conscious references to 'Uthmān before, during, and in the aftermath of the battle of Karbalā' appear to have been so common that, after entering the early sources, they continued to be transmitted to later sources. Particularly in the second century, when the notion of *ṣaḥābī*ness itself became crystallized, such piety conscious themes, and references to them in the literature also began to acquire greater significance. As evidenced by Ibn Ṭāwūs's apparently deliberate manipulation of earlier accounts and later Shī'ī authors following suit, by the time the later Shī'ī sources began to compile their own versions, the references to 'Uthmān were either ignored altogether, or reworded so as to not mention 'Uthmān by name, nor any other figure towards whom the authors were antagonistic. Whereas the references in later sources betray obvious manipulation of the texts of the narrations by later authors, the references in earlier sources are noticeably different. The nature of the piety conscious references to 'Uthmān in the early texts, their placement within the narrations and their appearance within the context of the events of Karbalā' all indicate a greater likeliness for

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their authenticity. In fact, keeping the historical context in mind, it would be surprising if there were no such references to 'Uthmān during the battle of Karbalā'. The occurrence of these kinds of piety conscious examples in the early sources, and perhaps more importantly, their absence in later Shī'ī versions of the same accounts shows quite clearly that the consciousness of 'Uthmān as a pious figure, and the memory of his killing were on the minds of those members of the early Islamic community who were involved in the battle of Karbalā'. As we shall see, this piety consciousness in the minds of early Muslims is evident not only from examples of references to 'Uthmān and the companions of Ḥusayn, but from those of references to Ḥusayn himself.

Analysis of Ibn Sa'd's Combined Isnād

Now that the first references to the Ibn Sa'd's combined *isnād* itself have been made (see previous subsection, fig. 1), the following subsection will delve into the actual analysis in significant detail. Moreover, since Ibn Sa'd's is the earliest detailed written source on the events of Karbalā', and since most of the sources that appear later borrow from Ibn Sa'd's account either in part or in its entirety, an analysis of the chains of transmission of the information in Ibn Sa'd's work is absolutely essential. In addition, comparison of Ibn Sa'd's *isnād* with the combined or individual *isnād*s of some of the later sources that rely heavily on his version of events will help to shed some light on the broader problem of transmission and borrowing between and among historical sources,

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above and beyond the level of individual tradents. Although it is far from the intent of this thesis to compile an encyclopedic work scrutinizing every single chain of transmission in such detail, a close examination of some of the most important chains (beginning with Ibn Sa'd's) will allow the reader a clearer understanding of the historiographical problems of transmission in early Islamic sources such as those dealing with Karbalā'.

Ibn Sa'd's combined *isnād* basically consists of two separate sections, each of which itself consists of three or four chains composed of two to three tradents each. The first section of the combined *isnād*, which shall henceforth be referred to as the "Wāqidī" section because it is transmitted to Ibn Sa'd from Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidī, while the second section shall be referred to as the 'Alī b. Muḥamad section for the same reason. We are told that the Wāqidī section is transmitted to Ibn Sa'd from Wāqidī from Ibn Abī Dhi'b from 'Abdullāh b. 'Umayr. In studying the biographies of these individuals,[26] we find Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidī to have died in 207, having been a respected *Qāḍī* (judge) in Baghdad, and known to have been the teacher of Ibn Sa'd. Accounts transmitted by al-Wāqidī also have a noticeable pro-'Alid bias, although there does not seem to have been any tangible evidence indicating that he was Shī'ī. Wāqidī's source, Ibn Abī Dhi'b, has been identified as a Kūfan, and died in 159, making it not at all unreasonable that Wāqidī could have met him and recorded his transmissions

[26] See *isnād* index for details on individual tradents.

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regarding the events of the battle of Karbalā'. But his status as a Kūfan, even though it may not necessarily prove any explicit pro-'Alid leanings, certainly does raise the possibility or even likeliness of an unfavorable attitude toward the Syrian Umayyads, particularly in light of the anti-Umayyad rebelliousness of the 'Irāqīs in general, and the Kūfans in particular. Moreover, his source is specified as 'Abdullāh b. 'Umayr, who, although his death date could not be determined, is specifically identified as a *mawlā* of the Hāshimīs. Again, though this does not necessarily signify an association with the 'Alids, for the clan of Hāshim included more than just the 'Alids, there is a very strong possibility that what is referred to as Hashimī is actually a reference to the line of the Prophet through 'Alī.

In addition, Ibn Sa'd's combined *isnād* identifies three points at which other chains intersect (*ḥaylūla*) with the above-mentioned chain ending in Wāqidī. However, it is unclear from the text of the *isnād* itself at exactly which point in the Wāqidī chain these other three connect. In other words, the wording of the original document does not make it clear whether the last tradent of the connecting chains transmitted his information to 'Abdullāh b. 'Umayr the *mawlā*, or to Ibn Abī Dhi'b, or to Wāqidī himself. Nevertheless, an examination of each of the three chains that connect to al-Wāqidī's reveals much about the potential biases of the information being transmitted. Firstly, examination of the biographies of the tradents in one of these connecting chains reveal that the final transmitter in the chain, Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd b. Dīnār al-Sa'dī, was a teacher of al-Wāqidī, and

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from Basra. This not only establishes that this chain connects directly to al-Wāqidī himself, but also that this chain of transmission is also an 'Irāqī one. This tradent's father, Sa'īd b. Dīnār al-Sa'dī, could not be identified in biographical sources, but it is not unreasonable to assume that the father and son were most likely of the same political or sectarian affiliation. Unlike this subchain, however, the remaining two chains are impossible to connect to the Wāqidī chain with any certainty, because of the lack of any death dates for the last tradents in the chains, which would allow us to match the last tradent in tha chain to the tradent of the appropriate generation in the Wāqidī chain. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that the last tradents in these two chains can not be identified, both show clear signs of pro-'Alid bias. In the first, though death dates of neither 'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad b. 'Umar b. 'Alī nor his father could be pinpointed, both were identified as 'Alids. And in the last of the three chains that connect to the Wāqidī chain, although 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī al-Zinād could not be identified, his source, Abū Wajza al-Sa'dī (d. 130) has as his source 'Alī b. Ḥusayn (d. 92) himself, and it is highly unlikely that the fourth Shī'ī *imām*, who was himself nearly killed at the battle of Karbalā' and who was humiliated and marched as a slave through the desert to Damascus, would be impartial in his narration of accounts of the battle! Thus, clearly detectable pro-'Alid affiliations are noticeable in the Wāqidī portion of Ibn Sa'd's combined *isnād*.

In comparison, the second portion of Ibn Sa'd's combined *isnād* seems, at least initially, slightly less 'Alid biased and even includes at least one Umayyad tradent. Like

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the Wāqidī section, this section consists of a chain of transmission directly to Ibn Sa'd from three individual tradents ('Alī b. Muḥammad from Yaḥyā b. Ismā'īl b. Abī al-Muhājir from his father Ismā'īl b. Abī al-Muhājir) to which four separate other chains connect at unspecified points. As for the transmission directly to Ibn Sa'd, neither 'Alī b. Muḥammad nor Yaḥyā b. Ismā'īl b. Abī al-Muhājir were directly identifiable though the biographical sources. Interestingly, however, Ismā'īl b. Abī al-Muhājir (d. 132) is identified specifically as a resident of Damascus and an Umayyad! Presumeably, his son Ismā'īl was also of the same political affiliation. At first glance, it seems that no matter how the remainder of the chains connect to this one (which leads directly to Ibn Sa'd himself) the information that is transmitted to this particular section of Ibn Sa'd's *isnād* chain would eventually lead to tradents with some pro-'Umayyad dendencies, in direct contrast to the Wāqidī portion mentioned earlier.

However, a closer examination of the details of the four chains that connect to this clearly 'Umayyad chain reveal that such is not necessarily the case. In the first of these connecting chains (Harūn b. 'Īsā from Yūnus b. Abī Isḥāq from Abū Isḥāq), neither Hārūn b. 'Īsā nor Abū Isḥāq were identifiable. However, Yūnus b. Abī Isḥāq (d. 159) was identified as a Kūfan, and the significance of Kūfan transmitters as likely to be, though not necessarily, pro-'Alid in inclination was mentioned above in the analysis of the Wāqidī portion of this combined *isnād*. Moreover, although a single Kūfan narrator can not be used to generalize to an entire combination of various chains of *isnād*s, we can see

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similar trends in the other three connecting chains of this portion of the combined *isnād*. For example, in the third connecting chain (Muḥammad b. al-Ḥajjāj from 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Umayr), though Muhammad b. al-Ḥajjāj was unidentifiable, 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Umayr (d. 136) was identified as a Kūfan. In the next connecting chain (Abū Mikhnaf from Muḥammad b. Bashīr al-Hamdānī), Abū Mikhnaf (d. 180) is known to have been Kūfan, and although the death date of this particular teacher of his is inspecified, we can presume that he died before Abū Mikhnaf (i.e., before 180). And in the fourth connecting chain all three tradents, Yaḥyā b. Zakarīyā b. Abī Zā'ida (d. 184), Mujālid (d. 144) and al-Sha'bī (d. 103-10) are all identified specifically as Kūfans.

And how does this biographical information prove that the information they transmit did not pass through the Umayyad filter of the original chain to which they connect (the chain of Ismā'īl b. Abī al-Muhājir, the Umayyad from Damascus), which leads directly to Ibn Sa'd himself? The answer is that the above-mentioned facts showing the tradents in the connecting chains to be Kūfans do not, but the death dates of the tradents very clearly do. In all four cases, the last tradent in the chain is clearly of a generation later than that of Ismā'īl b. Abī al-Muhājir (d. 132), the Damascus 'Umayyad, or even of his son Yaḥyā, who was of the generation who died in the 140's and 150's. Note that, of all of the last tradents of the four connecting chains, Yaḥyā b. Zakarīyā b. Abī Zā'ida (d. 184), Abū Mikhnaf (d. 180), Muḥammad b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. after 136), and Hārūn b. 'Īsā (d. after 159) it is highly unlikely that any of them connect to the central

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chain of this portion at anywhere other than the final link, 'Alī b. Muḥammad. In this manner, all four connecting chains completely bypass the known Umayyad and his potentially Umayyad son altogether.

This means that a portion of a combined *isnād* which initially seemed to represent an Umayyad transmission is actually only one-fifth an Umayyad transmission and four-fifths Kūfan (and potentially pro-'Alid). Then, adding to this what we discovered from examining the Wāqidī portion of Ibn Sa'd's combined *isnād* chain, which was composed of four distinctly pro-'Alid subchains, we see that the combined *isnād* as a whole consists of nine subchains, out of which eight are Kūfan/'Alid and only one is Umayyad. Of course, because of the very nature of any combined report, it is difficult, if not impossible to determine from *isnād* chains precisely which portions of the narrative account are attributable to which tradents, but, as we shall see in the remainder of this thesis, general trends of pro-'Umayyad, pro-'Alid, or pro-'Abbāsid, etc, can also be identified in individual pericopes within the narrative accounts in the various sources.

And, in addition to the Ibn Sa'd himself, a number of other sources also make use of Ibn Sa'd's combined report, including al-Dhahabī and Ibn 'Asākir. In his *Siyar a'lām* al-Dhahabī provides a combined *isnād* of his own (see fig. 2) which is actually not much more than a few of the sub-chains mentioned in Ibn Sa'd's own *isnād*, but recombined in a slightly different manner. In this altered and recombined form the same primary chain identified as the 'Wāqidī' chain in our analysis of Ibn Sa'd's combined *isnād* above (al-

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Wāqidī, from Ibn Abī Dhi'b, from 'Abdullāh b. 'Umayr) reappears in al-Dhahabī. However, connected to this primary chain are only two subchains, both of which also appear to be from among the subshains mentioned by Ibn Sa'd. One of these is Abū al-Zinād from Abū Wajza. This appears to be a scribal error, for the Ibn Sa'd chain mentions an 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī al-Zinād, whom we have identified as a Medinese Qurayshī who died in 174. And, since we know that Abū Wajza died in 130, intergenerational transmission leads us to believe that it is unlikely that al-Dhahabī's version is correct at the expense of Ibn Sa'd's. Thus, al-Dhahabī's (Abū al-Zinād from Abū Wajza) is probably actually the same as Ibn Sa'd's ('Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī al-Zinād from Abū Wajza al-Sa'dī). Interestingly, al-Dhahabī neglects to mention that Abū Wajza himself had as his source 'Alī b. Ḥusayn, while Ibn Sa'd does mention this.

Also, the second subchain identified by al-Dhahabī as connecting to the primary 'Wāqidī' chain also appears to be part of Ibn Sa'd's combined *isnād*. This subchain is identified by al-Dhahabī as (Yūnus b. Abī Isḥāq, from Abū Isḥāq, from an unspecified group of others. In Ibn Sa'd's *isnād* the corresponding subchain is (Hārūn b. Īsā, from Yūnus b. Abī Isḥāq, from Abū Isḥāq). Although the correspondence is not so surprising, what is very interesting is that in Ibn Sa'd's combined *isnād* he does not connect this group of tradents to the Wāqidī portion of his chain of transmission. Instead he connects this subchain with the Umayyad portion of his chain ('Ali b. Muḥammad, from Yaḥyā b. Ismā'īl b. Abī al-Muhājir, from Ismā'īl b, Abī al-Muhājir). This does not indicate that

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Abū Isḥāq and his son could not have transmitted information to the Wāqidī chain, but there is a serious likelihood that either al-Dhahabī or an intermediary scribe at some point may have mistranscribed a portion of the text and a chain of transmission that was previously connected elsewhere accidentally ecame connected to the Wāqidī chain. In any case, the details are irrelevant to the end result, because all of the information was recombined into a combined report regardless of the intermediary connections of the individual subchains. The most important factor in this case is that the individual subchains in al-Dhahabī, although far fewer in number, all correspond to some of the same subchains referred to by Ibn Sa'd, and thus the sources of the information on Karbalā' are shared by both compilers. Thus, in addition to the easily discernible textual similarities that the reader can notice between the two compilations, the above *isnād* analysis serves as corroborating evidence in proving that nearly all of al-Dhahabī's Karbalā' narrative is borrowed from Ibn Sa'd's earlier written work, rather than a direct chain of transmission from al-Dhahabī to the informants he cites.

This type of borrowing is even more clear in Ibn 'Asākir, who cites Ibn Sa'd specifically, lists Ibn Sa'd's own *isnād* chain verbatim, and lists the tradents connecting himself to Ibn Sa'd (fig. 3). Close analysis reveals that, of the tradents in the five generations elapsing between himself (d. 571) and Ibn Sa'd (d. 230), none of the later tradents were identifiable. However, the fifth of the five tradents (al-Ḥusayn b. Fahm al-Faqīh, was discovered and identified in the sources as a resident of Baghdad and a student

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of Ibn Sa'd himself. It is quite clear that Ibn 'Asākir's clear intentions in meticulous citation of his sources as he received the information he documented are a testament to his foresight and to the level of his historical consciousness. Not only that, but the fact that he was an Umayyad by genealogy and a resident of the Umayyad capital, in the heartland of the region of strongest Umayyad sentiments and still transmitted almost verbatim such a quantity of clearly Kūfan based, anti-Umayyad information is undeniably also a testament his objectivity and to the level of his scholarship.

From close analysis of the *isnād* chains of transmission of Ibn Sa'd's combined report, and similar analyses of later compilers such as al-Dhahabī and Ibn 'Asākir, it is evident that Ibn Sa'd's, as the earliest source providing a comprehensive narrative for the events of the battle of Karbalā' undoubtedly influenced later sources. Among these, al-Dhahabī relies heavily on Ibn Sa'd's account, and this is evident not only from textual evidence, but also by the similarities exhibited in the *isnād* chains of transmission mentioned in each author's text. And with Ibn 'Asākir, not only is the citation of Ibn Sa'd's account evident from the nearly verbatim transmission of the text, but Ibn 'Asākir also cites Ibn Sa'd specifically in his own *isnād* chain and even cites Ibn Sa'd's own combined *isnād* in its entirety.

Having examined in detail the *isnād* chains of transmission of three of the main sources of information, (see figs. 1-3), let us now return our attention to the remainder of

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this chapter by examining the literary evidence of piety-consiousness in these and other early Islamic sources as such evidence relates to Ḥusayn himself.

Ḥusayn

The proliferation of such piety conscious references in early Karbalā'-related literature, and the fact that they appear in Sunnī as well as Shī'ī sources both indicate that there was a general awareness of the nearly holy status of the pious companions of the Prophet by the time of the battle of Karbalā', and that this consciousness was transmitted in oral accounts until it entered the literature by the time of the earliest sources, in the mid second century AH. Close study reveals that there also appears in Shī'ī sources an awareness of the companionship of certain individuals to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and to Ḥasan b. 'Alī, the father and elder brother of Ḥusayn, respectively. This type of recognition of the exemplary character of the pious companions seems to serve a parallel purpose in Shī'ī contexts as it does in Sunnī ones, and both seem to express themselves in a similar fashion. It is interesting, however, that, unlike the way in which early Karbalā'-related sources sources deal differently with such figures as Zuhayr b. al-Qayn, 'Uthmān b. 'Affān, Burayr b. Ḥuḍayr al-Hamdānī, and Muslim b. 'Awsaja, they seem to agree that, more than any of the other companions alive by the time the battle of Karbalā' took place, Ḥusayn represented the 'ideal' Islamic type. As noted by Donner, "the only judgement about a person that really matters, in the Qur'ānic view, is whether he or she is good or

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evil, and most characters presented in the Qur'ānic narratives fall squarely on one side or other of that great divide."[27] Ḥusayn, more than any other figure at the time, epitomized this ideal Qur'ānic character, for he was not only a companion, not only a memorizer of Qur'ān, and not only extremely pious, but he was also the grandson of the Prophet of God himself. Sunnī and Shī'ī sources consistently depict Ḥusayn as posessing not only an aura of piety consciousness, but also a strong genealogy consciousness not apparent in any previous examples. Sources of both sectarian biases provide nearly exact accounts depicting a variety of scenes of Ḥusayn's early life that clearly define Ḥusayn's relationship with the Prophet as one of not only a simple bond of blood relations, but even more. Such accounts often appear in the sources in the beginning of the collection of accounts on Ḥusayn's life. These accounts are sometimes more than simply a description of a series of events during which Ḥusayn interacts with the Prophet or with other companions. Often, the accounts share an underlying tone that results in a depiction of Ḥusayn as not merely a pious companion, and not just the grandson of the Prophet. Even more than this, Ḥusayn is classified in the early sources as one of the handful of figures considered to be the *ahl al-bayt* (people of the household) of the Prophet.[28] Although there are a number of varying definitions as to just what the term *ahl al-bayt* referred to, all of the early sources (both Shī'ī and Sunnī) recognize that Ḥasan and

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[27] Donner, *Narratives*, 75-76.

[28] See Wilfred F. Madelung, *The Succession to Muḥammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), chapter 4.

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Ḥusayn, even more so than Fāṭima or the Prophet's wives, grew up during their childhood with Muḥammad as a Prophet. That is to say, the early sources clearly recognize that Ḥusayn and his brother were the only two youths who were, quite literally, 'raised' by Muḥammad as Prophet and leader of the first Islamic community in Madīna. [29] And within that Madinese environment they were grandchildren to, and raised by, the Prophet himself, the supreme example of everything that it meant to be Muslim. Ḥusayn and his brother Ḥasan were the thus the first children to be, on both a filial and social level, born into and raised in a completely Islamicized environment. In this sense they were not only viewed as almost the children of the Prophet, but in a broader sense, they were also the first children of Islam itself. [30]

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[29] Muḥammad's daughter Fāṭima was raised for the most part in Mecca, prior to Muḥammad's leadership as Prophet in Madīna, and the wives of the Prophet, although part of his household, were clearly not raised by him. Even 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, the Prophet's cousin and the youngest Muslim, practically raised by Muḥammad from his youth, was not raised by the Prophet in infancy.

[30] There are even a number of accounts describing that during the naming of the two children, the Prophet chose for them the purely Islamic names, never before appearing among *jāhilīya* Arabs, making Ḥasan and Ḥusayn the first children born in Islam to have purely Islamic names. Note: numerous versions of these isolated *akhbār* of Ḥusayn's early childhood appear even within a single source and are transmitted by a set of tradents that seem to hae been concerned not with Ḥusayn but with events of the Prophet's lifetime. Because these are isolated accounts of Ḥusayn's infancy and because they are are outside the realm of the Karbalā' narratives (both textually, and in terms of the community of tradents that transmitted them) they will be identified only by source, page number, and *khabar* number, for those interested in further details. See: Ibn Sa'd, 28 (#'s 212-3); Balādhurī, p, 144; Dulābī, 119-20 (#'s136-42); Ṭabarānī, 26-29 (#'s 8-13); Usd al-ghāba, 19; Siyar a'lām, 247.

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One account that is often repeated in the sources and seems to be a perfect example of just how such accounts can have broader implications is one that recounts how, while the Prophet was leading a congregational prayer and in prostration posture, the young child Ḥusayn climbed up on his back and played on the Prophet as if riding a horse. Rather than shaking Husayn gently off his back so that he could continue the next prayer posture, the Prophet remained in prostration for an unusual length of time until Ḥusayn finished his game and tired of his new 'horse'. When asked after the prayer why he delayed the prostration so long (those following behind him in prayer could not lift their own heads from prostration to see, because they may move on to the next posture only after the leader of the congregation does so first) Muḥammad replied that Ḥusayn was playing on his back, and he did not want to spoil Ḥusayn's fun.[31] Such accounts actually serve to make a very bold, and even radical statement on the relationship between Muḥammad and Ḥusayn. Underneath the grandfatherly concern of Muḥammad for the baby Ḥusayn, there seems to be an implication that even the ritual prayers were accommodated to appease Ḥusayn.

There are also other similar accounts that do not have such extreme implications, but are also good examples of this type of account nonetheless. One that is often repeated in the *khabar*-oriented sources relates how one day the Prophet was hugging and kissing the baby Ḥusayn when he suddenly urinated all over the Prophet's clothing. Immediately,

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[31] Ibn Sa'd, p 24 (#'s 203, 205, 210); Majlisī, 44:229.

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a woman who was taking care of the baby Ḥusayn that day pinched Ḥusayn and scolded him for urinating on the Prophet of God, whereupon the baby Ḥusayn began to cry. Then the Prophet supposedly reproached the wet nurse for making Ḥusayn cry, saying that it pained him to hear Ḥusayn crying.[32] As with the previous example, which places the importance of Ḥusayn in (supposedly) the Prophet's eyes over ritual prayer, this example places Ḥusayn above the ritual purity of the Prophet himself.[33] Though numerous other examples exist, they need not be mentioned here, as these few examples clearly illustrate how the early *khabar*-type sources not only 'authenticate' Ḥusayn's character by stressing his genealogical connection to the Prophet, in the accounts compiled of the *akhbār* of the earlier period of Ḥusayn's life, but also ascribe to Ḥusayn a position of much greater importance than an ordinary pious companion.

Within the context of the battle of Karbalā' however, a number of references appear in the more narrative-oriented sources, that identify much more specifically the way in which Ḥusayn himself was viewed as having special recognition not only as a pious companion and as the grandson of Muḥammad, but as the last remaining vestige of such closeness to the Prophet, and as such, demanded respect. And this view is portrayed as being held not only by those who chose to fight alongside Ḥusayn and take him as their

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[32] Ibn Sa'd, 19, 20 (#'s 193-7); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 7; Majlisī, 44:229, 247.

[33] Urine is one of the elements that renders one impure and unable to perform prayer or read the Qur'ān, etc.

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leader, but, as we shall see, also those who were gathered to fight against him, as well as those who experienced the aftermath of the battle.

Within the frame of the narrations, one of the accounts that appears repeatedly in the sources is an account of a scene between Ḥurr b. Yazīd al-Riyāḥī, the general of troops sent to intercept Ḥusayn on the caravan route from Madīna to Kūfa, and Ḥusayn himself. In their conversation, Ḥurr attempted to convince Ḥusayn to submit to the allegiance of Yazīd, and prevented Ḥusayn from traveling any further. After Ḥusayn refused to submit, attempted to continue onwards, and was blocked by Ḥurr and his troops, Ḥusayn insulted Ḥurr's mother. To Ḥusayn's grave insult Ḥurr responded, "If anyone other than you said such things to me, I would have insulted his mother likewize. But you are one whose mother I can not insult." [34] This response is quite telling. Historically not impossible, and perhaps even likely, it shows a clear consciousness of the fact that Ḥusayn was the son of Fāṭima, and had the blood of Muḥammad running through his veins. The depiction of insulting his mother as impossible is an attempt to indicate that Ḥusayn was viewed by people as being, literally, a breed apart from the ordinary citizen of the early Islamic community. In fact, this was the case not only for Ḥurr b. Yazīd al-Riyāḥī, but also for a significant number of those enlisted by the Umayyad powers to fight against Ḥusayn. Indeed, one of the earliest sources depicts

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[34] Balādhurī, 170 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 402 (←Hishām ← Laqīt ← 'Alī b. al-Ṭa''ān al-Muḥāribī); Iṣfahānī, 111 (← Abū Mikhnaf); Khwārazmī, 232 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); al-Kāmil, 47 (n.i.); Majlisī 44:377 (←'Alī b. al-Ṭa''ān al-Muḥāribī).

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'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād as having had a rather difficult time enlisting enough people when he heard the news that Ḥusayn was coming from Madīna, and attempted to gather together troops to fight Ḥusayn.[35] Balādhurī indicates that 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād demanded a count of 1,000 males from the chiefs of each tribal group, but actually ended up with only a few hundred from each tribe. Even some generals, such as Shibth b. Rab'ī, when summoned by 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād to gather troops and fight against Ḥusayn, are depicted as having attempted to avoid being enlisted to fight Ḥusayn by feigning sickness.[36] Furthermore, even after a significant army was enlisted, and after all of Ḥusayn's companions had been killed, in the last moments of the battle, when Ḥusayn was wounded and surrounded by thousands of troops, the sources are consistent in depicting the soldiers as hesitant to kill Ḥusayn. Nearly every source relates a detailed depiction of soldiers stalling after having encircled and wounded Ḥusayn, with higher-level army commanders ordering subordinates to kill Ḥusayn, but without immediate result.[37] In addition, some of the sources add that, even though Ḥusayn was fallen and wounded, the soldiers in the army were afraid of him "like sheep afraid of a wolf,"[38] or,

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[35] Balādhurī, 179 (n.i.).

[36] Khwārazmī, 242 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham).

[37] Ibn Sa'd, 75 (← IS); Balādhurī, 202 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 436; 450, 452 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Ḥusayn b. 'Uqba al-Murādī ← al-Zubaydī); al-Kāmil, 68, 75 (n.i.); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 51 (n.i.); Siyar a'lām, 297 (← SA-IS).

[38] al-Kāmil, 77 (n.i.).

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in later sources, "like sheep afraid of a lion."[39] Although superficially it may seem like a compliment to Ḥusayn's bravery in fighting, because these accounts always appear after Ḥusayn has fallen and was too weak to fight any longer, they are rather clear attempts to portray the soldiers as hesitant in spilling the 'holy' blood of Ḥusayn.

Even Ḥurr b. Yazīd al-Riyāḥī, who was the first to encounter Ḥusayn and then besiege his camp at Karbalā', is depicted as not having known just how far his superiors were willing to go to deal with the thorn of Ḥusayn that was in their side. On the final day of the battle, when the commander of the army refused Ḥusayn's offer to resolve the matter peacefully, Ḥurr asked the commander, "Are you really going to kill this man?" [40] Ḥurr, and others as well, are depicted as having only expected Ḥusayn to be imprisoned or taken to Yazīd, but none of them are portrayed as having expected his blood to be shed.

And, even after the battle of Karbalā' and the murder of Ḥusayn, depictions of people's reactions to the aftermath of the battle also attempt to reinforce this view. One such example appears in even the earliest source and relates how, after the battle of Karbalā' and the murder of Ḥusayn, when Ḥusayn's head was being paraded around the Islamic lands, people could not believe that it was the head of Ḥusayn. [41] This portrayal

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[39] Siyar a'lām, 302 (← SA-IS). Such depictions of Ḥusayn will be studied in detail in chapter 4.

[40] Ibn Sa'd, 72 (← IS); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 43 (n.i.); Majlisī, 45:10 (← al-Mufīd).

[41] Ibn Sa'd, 89 (← Ismā'īl b. Mūsā ← Sulaymān b. Muslim ← Muslim).

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attempts to show not only how the act of killing Ḥusayn was viewed by the common people, but also how Ḥusayn himself was viewed. Such depictions stress that not only was Ḥusayn a companion and grandson of the Prophet, but his connection to the roots of Islam were such that, no matter what crime he may have committed, the people never imagined that anyone would dare to inflict upon him such a punishment. A different account, but with similar implications depicts Umm Salama in Madīna as hearing the news of the killing of Ḥusayn at Karbalā', and screaming, "They really did it? They really killed Ḥusayn?!"[42] and another account describes how, when Ḥusayn's head was being paraded around on a spear, the spectators assumed that it was the head of someone else because they could not imagine that Ḥusayn could be disrespected in such a manner.[43] Just as with the previous example, this depiction attempts to portray the people who were aware of just who Ḥusayn was as not at all expecting that his enemies would go as far as they did in dealing with Ḥusayn's refusal to give allegiance. The depictions of the disbelief of the figures in the previous and other examples are used to testify to this point. Ḥusayn is shown as having become almost a symbol of the origins of Islam. Ḥusayn was then, the last remaining physical connection to the Prophet, in flesh

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[42] Ibn Sa'd, 89 (← 'Alī b. Muḥammad ← 'Abd al-ḥamīd b. Bahrām ← Shahr b. Ḥawshab); Ibn 'Asākir, 238 (← Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Bāqī ← Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī ← Abū 'Umar Muḥammad b. 'Abbās ← Abū al-Ḥasan Aḥmad b. Ma'rūf ← al-Ḥusayn b. al-Fahm ← Muḥammad b. Sa'd ← Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī ← Qurra b. Khālid ← 'Āmir b. 'Abd al-Wāḥid ← Shahr b. Ḥawshab).

[43] Ibn Sa'd, 89 (← Mūsā b. Ismā'īl ← Abū al-Ma'allī al-'Ijlī ← his father).

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and blood. Such portrayals indicate that it seems to have been assumed that no matter what he may have done, Ḥusayn, simply by virtue of being who he was, did not deserve to be dealt with in the way that the Umayyad powers dealt with him.

Furthermore, one can note that, in the aftermath of the battle, there seems to have been an attempt from the upper echelons of Umayyad power to wash their hands clean of Ḥusayn's blood by blaming subordinates. We see accounts of Yazīd blaming 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, his governor at Kūfa, and 'Ubaydullāh in turn blaming 'Umar b. Sa'd, his general appointed in command of the entire army, in a sort of trickle-down effect of appointing responsibility for the murder of Ḥusayn. [44] This is also telling because once the deed was done, popular reaction might have been so overwhelmingly more negative than the Umayyads had expected, that they began to attempt to develop ways to deal with the aftermath of the events of the battle of Karbalā' in as self-advantageous a way as possible. In fact, the next chapter will examine the Umayyads' attempts to use political rhetoric to legitimize their stance at Karbalā', both before and after the battle.

All of these examples serve to illustrate the extraordinary regard with which Ḥusayn was viewed, by way of examples in early Islamic sources of accounts of Ḥusayn's early childhood with the Prophet, of the battle of Karbalā' itself, and of people's reactions to the aftermath of the battle. Ḥusayn was clearly being seen not only as a symbol of the

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[44] Ṭabarī, 467 (← Hishām ← 'Awāna). This will be discussed in detail in chapter 5, on characterizations.

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earliest days of Islam, but also as the living embodiment, in flesh and blood, of the last remaining direct physical connection to the Prophet. It was precisely the Islamic community's consciousness of this genealogical connection to the Prophet (in addition to his piety consciousness) that made Ḥusayn a threat to the Umayyads wishing to hold on to power. The aura of piety/genealogy consciousness that surrounded Ḥusayn was precisely what made him, in the eyes of the faithful, the prime candidate for caliphate after the death of Mu'āwiya. It was also that very same aura of piety/genealogy consciousness surrounding Ḥusayn that made him, in the eyes of the Umayyads, the greatest threat to Yazīd's pending caliphate. Now that we have seen just how pervasive the aura of piety/genealogy consiousness that surrounded Ḥusayn was, and just how much of a threat it was to the fledgling Umayyad dynasty, the following chapter will deal with the Umayyad establishment's awareness of this aura of piety/genealogy consciousness, and their attempts to neutralize the political power that it granted Ḥusayn.

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CHAPTER 3

UMAYYAD ATTEMPTS TO NEUTRALIZE PIETY/GENEALOGY CONSCIOUSNESS

Having established from the sources that there did exist a sense of piety and genealogy consciousness in the minds of some early believers, and that Ḥusayn's reputation as the grandson of, and one of the last remaining companions of the Prophet was the prime factor fueling his candidacy for the caliphate, we shall now take a closer look at how the sources portray the Umayyad powers as having dealt with the threat of a Ḥusayn whose character was pervaded by an aura of piety and geneology consciousness and the inherent aura of holiness that accompanied it. A number of accounts in the early sources show quite clearly that one of the ways in which the Umayyad establishment dealt with this problem was by countering the piety-consciousness itself, in an attempt to neutralize the aura of holiness that surrounded Ḥusayn and the legitimation for leadership that it provided him. One method by which the Umayyads accomplished this was by stressing the unity of Muslims and discouraging further division (thereby legitimizing the status quo) and by accusing Ḥusayn of divisive intentions as well as making other personal attacks on him. In this way, the Umayyads attempted to characterize Ḥusayn as

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a 'separatist,' [1] thereby restricting his potential for leadership by attributing his leadership to a rebel minority and denying any possible credibility he might have had as a candidate for the position of caliph of the Muslim community as a whole. Such rhetoric is found throughout the early sources, and manifests itself particularly in correspondences and accounts of conversations between members of the Umayyad administration and their representatives on the one hand, and Ḥusayn and his representatives on the other. Although there are a few such references that appear in accounts of the battle itself, the vast majority of these seem to appear both prior to the battle of Karbalā', when both sides were attempting to establish their political stances (and while an actual military confrontation was still not imminent), and in the aftermath of the battle, when the victors attempted to legitimize their killing of the grandson of their own prophet.

Political rhetoric was only one of the methods portrayed as being used by the Umayyads against the piety consciousness of Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, apparently because it was not always successful. Depictions in the sources indicate that a number of influential figures were not willing to believe the Umayyad propaganda against Ḥusayn, while others who did so initially, then became wary of it. The limited success of their propaganda campaign against Ḥusayn led the Umayyads to resort to other means in order to achieve two of their most important goals at the time. The first of these goals was to convince

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[1] Even in modern political rhetoric, the term 'separatist' nearly always has negative connotations, often associated with violence and disregard for the harmony that is naturally associated with unity and communal interests.

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people that they should denounce the oath of allegiance they had already pledged to Ḥusayn (and thereby not take up arms under his leadership), and the second was to recruit people to actually fight *against* Ḥusayn and whoever decided to remain faithful to their oath of allegiance to him. The accounts of these measures taken on the part of the Umayyads to neutralize Ḥusayn, which appear even in pro-Umayyad sources, indicate the extensive use of threats, intimidation, and blatant bribery to accomplish the Umayyad agenda.[2] And, in spite of all of the rhetoric, bribes and threats, the Umayyad attempts at neutralizing Ḥusayn's piety/genealogy consciousness seems to have been quite successful on the practical level of realpolitik, but only moderately effective on a purely ideological level. This is evidenced by the fact that even the apparently anti-Ḥusayn sources depict the majority of those participating in the confrontation against Ḥusayn as having done so not at all with the intention of killing Ḥusayn, but cooperated with the Umayyads believing that the aim of the confrontation with Ḥusayn was to frighten him into following the majority in their acceptance of Yazīd's (and thereby the Umayyads') rule.[3] Another indication that the Umayyad propaganda was not as ideologically effective[4] as was hoped is that the sources seem to agree that the most ruthless bloodshed during the

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[2] But, as we shall see, pro-Umayyad sources portray such behavior as "encouragement" and "financial support" rather than intimidation and bribery.

[3] See below, 'Intensification of Anti-Ḥusayn Propaganda,' and chapter 3, on the economy of confrontation.

[4] On a practical level the Umayyad propaganda campaign was totally successful. Ḥusayn was defeated and his political threat was eliminated.

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events of Karbalā' was committed not by the Arabian Muslims at whom the rhetoric and bribes seem to have been aimed, but by the hands of foreign *ghulām* slaves of Turkish, Persian, and African origins. This fact in itself testifies to a rather interesting phenomenon in early Islamic history: the use of foreign *ghulām*s for the bloodiest actions taken against Ḥusayn and his supporters that a piety/genealogy-conscious Arabian populace would have deemed dishonorable and 'unIslamic.' Finally, the sources also attest to another interesting phenomenon, particularly in accounts of the final day of the actual battle itself, when, in disregard of insurmountable odds and in clear defiance of the intense barrage of Umayyad anti-Ḥusayn propaganda, a number of individuals defected from the Umayyad army and joined Ḥusayn's camp. These defections, which are narrated even in apparently anti-'Alid sources, show the simultaneous success and failure of the Umayyad rhetoric and propaganda campaign against Ḥusayn. On the one hand, such depictions agree that the Umayyad attempts at neutralizing Ḥusayn's piety/genealogy consciousness succeeded in recruiting these individuals to fight against him. But, on the other hand, some of the soldiers are also characterized as having made the suicidal decision to defect to Ḥusayn's camp. Thus, as we shall see, the sources' depictions of Umayyad attempts to neutralize the piety and genealogy conscious aura surrounding Ḥusayn, beginning with political rhetoric, accompanied by blatant bribery and threats, and, when even that failed, by using foreign *ghulāms*, which, along with the defections of

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certain individuals all serve to portray the extent to which common people were affected by the Umayyad propaganda at all its various levels.

Propaganda

Part of the way in which the Umayyad establishment is depicted as having countered the aura of piety/genealogy consciousness that surrounded Ḥusayn was by using a political rhetoric that undermined Ḥusayn's association with the Prophet and the principles of Islam. This is evidenced in the sources on the level of individual correspondences and conversations, by public dissemination of such rhetoric via the pulpits of congregational mosques, and during rhetorical interactions at Karbalā', Kūfa, and Damascus between Hāshimīs and Umayyads. The fact that such accounts appear relatively consistently throughout nearly all of the sources, albeit in different degrees of detail and sophistication, make the existence of this phenomenon that much more removed from the possibility of sectarian authorial manipulation. At least in regard to this particular aspect of the events of Karbalā' (the phenomenon of Umayyad propaganda against Ḥusayn) the authors' sectarian and political interests manifest themselves not in the authors' inclusion or exclusion of accounts of the phenomenon in the written record. Rather, the hand of the author shows itself in the degree to which such propagandistic accounts are emphasized in their respective sources. Naturally, pro-Umayyad authors tended to de-emphasize the phenomenon, while anti-Umayyad authors emphasized it.

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Nevertheless, in neither case did the authors neglect to mention its occurrence. Unlike certain other clearly dubious aspects of the narrations of the events of Karbalā', which appear consistenly in a certain group of sources and are consistently absent in others, the appearance of Umayyad propaganda techniques in all of the sources, including even those that appear to have a pro-Umayyad bias, makes it clearly another example of a shared theme appearing consistently in the Karbalā' sources. As such, the following section on Umayyad attempts at countering piety/genealogy consciousness will deal with the phenomenon *as depicted in the sources*, and not necessarily the historical phenomenon.

A close examination of the appearance of this phenomenon and the depictions of the methods employed by 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād and others within the Umayyad administration in the light of modern propaganda theory reveals a rather remarkable parallelism between the rhetoric of the Umayyad propaganda campaign and what is currently considered the science of propaganda theory. Although intitially sparked by political necessity in the context of the world wars,[5] the study of propaganda has since developed into a discipline of its own. After examining more scholarly postwar works on

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[5] For examples of early studies directly influenced by the world wars, see: Benjamin Akzin, *Propaganda by Diplomats* (Washington, D.C.: American University, 1936); Sergei Chakhotin, *The Rape of the Masses: The Psychology of Totalitarian Political Propaganda* (London: G. Routledge, 1940); Leonard William Doob, *Propaganda: Its Psychology and Technique* (New York: H. Holt and company, 1935); Karin Dovring, *Road of Propaganda: The Semantics of Biased Communication* (New York, Philosophical Library, 1959); William Castle Hummel, *The Analysis of Propaganda* (New York: Sloane, 1949); Max Lerner, *Ideas Are Weapons: The History and Uses of Ideas* (New York: The Viking Press, 1939); Hilmar Stephen Raushenbush, *High Power Propaganda* (New York: New Republic, 1928).

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propaganda theory it has become quite clear that nearly all of the major factors technically characterizing a propaganda campaign can be found in accounts of the events of the battle of Karbalā' in the early historical sources. The *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* defines propaganda as "The relatively deliberate manipulation, by means of symbols (words, gestures, flags, images, monuments, music, etc...) of other peoples' thoughts or actions with respect to beliefs, values, or behaviors which those people (reactors) regard as controversial."[6] A number of key factors currently considered integral to the success of any propaganda campaign have been recognized in artifacts dating to even the earliest human civilizations. Modern scholars have identified certain propaganda tactics essential to the success of any political or military campaign, in architectectural, numismatic, artistic and literary evidence dating from as early as primitive man and ancient Mesopotamia,[7] through Greek antiquity, the medieval era, and up to the modern time.[8] Among these are:

a) incessant repetition of a single idea

b) appeal of this idea to sentiment, and not to reason

c) creation of the optimum anxiety level by playing on hopes and fears,

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[6] David Sills, ed., *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, (New York: Crowell Collier and Macmillan, 1968), 12:579.

[7] Phillip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: War Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Nuclear Age* (Wellenborough, England: Patrick Stephens Ltd., 1990), 19-23.

[8] Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (London: Sage Publications, 1999), 47-96 and 203-5; Daniel Lerner, ed., *Propaganda in War and Crisis* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 344-355.

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And, in order to make such theoretical tactics succeed in application, the propaganda machine must have:

d) means of mass-dissemination of the above propaganda, and

e) organizational resources prepared to channel the newly generated anxiety and energy of the populace.

As we shall see, all of the above points can be clearly noted in the context of the Umayyad propaganda campaign during the events of Karbalā', including the incessant insistence on unity, and the appeal to the Muslims' sentiments by warning against intra-Muslim fratricidal bloodshed, and the threats of military destruction. Furthermore, it is clear that the Umayyads made extensive use of the pulpits of congregational mosques, as did their predecessors, as their media in order to spread their propaganda. In addition, when a military confrontation became imminent, the Umayyads had already positioned an organized military structure in place, and ready to receive and organize an influx of new soldiers recruited as a result of the Umayyad propaganda campaign.

A closer look at each of these factors, in turn, and the way in which these theoretical aspects of propaganda theory manifest themselves in historical accounts of the methods of the Umayyads as depicted in the early sources may shed some light on the possible reasons for the success of the Umayyad propaganda campaign against Ḥusayn, and the failure of Ḥusayn's own attempts at counter-propaganda.

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The Sentimental Appeal of Anti-Ḥusayn Propaganda

Among the aspects of propaganda theory that are most noticeable in the tactics of the Umayyad propaganda machine is the incessant repetition of a single idea that appealed to the sentiments of the populace.[9] In the case of the Muslims of the Ḥijāz and 'Irāq who had already given their allegiance to Ḥusayn or were prepared to do so, the rhetoric emphasized by Umayyad loyalists, as depicted in the historical sources, shows a keen awareness on the part of the Umayyads of the psychology of their audience. This is apparent in the Umayyads' insistence on the unity of the community and their warnings against factionalism and fratricidal bloodshed.[10] Fully aware of the psychological trauma of the numerous civil wars (*fitna*) that resulted in intra-communal bloodshed in the decades prior to Ḥusayn's attempt at the caliphate, such as those that resulted in the murder of 'Uthmān in 35/655-6, the slayings of Ṭalḥa, Zubayr, and others in 36/656-7, and the battle of Ṣiffīn in 37/658-9, the Umayyad rhetoric played on people's sentimental hopes for unity, and their fear of further bloodshed. Not only were the memories of such traumatic intra-communal bloodshed likely to have been vivid in the collective memory of battle-aged men at the time of Karbalā', but such intra-communal violence was likely

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[9] Jaques Ellul, *Propagandes*, (Paris: A. Colin, 1962), 181-214; K. D. Hartmann, *Politische Beeinflussung: Voraussetzungen, Ablauf, und Wirkungen* (Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1969), 36-48; H. Kumata, and W. L. Schramm, *Four Working Papers on Propaganda Theory* (Urbana-Champaign, IL: Institute of Communications Research/United States Information Agency, 1955), 34-36.

[10] Ibn Sa'd, 54-59 (← IS). Ironically, it was that very same sentiment against bloodshed within the community that was later used against the Umayyads, for being all to quick in their readiness to shed the blood of Ḥusayn.

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significant enough to traumatize an entire generation of Muslims who grew up believing that they were part of a community divinely chosen to implement the revealed will of God on Earth.[11] As we shall see, there are in the sources numerous examples of accounts indicating that the Umayyads were keenly aware of the psychological effect that such fratricidal bloodshed had on the communal conscience of the population, and manipulated this fact to maximize their political advantage.

References to such rhetoric and propaganda in the early sources can be divided into those conversations and correspondences that occured prior to the battle of Karbalā', those during the heat of the battle itself, and those that occured in the aftermath of the battle. Of these three categories, the most material appears prior to the battle and after it, with a few references also during the battle. Although this may appear unusual, a closer analysis of the historical context actually supports such a distribution. When taking into consideration the fact that the period of months just prior to the battle was one of great political tension, it is understandable that so much rhetoric would appear in correspondences between the Umayyad administration and Ḥusayn. Similarly, in the aftermath of the battle, the Umayyads seem to have been keen to defend the killing of Ḥusayn as legitimate, and a barrage of anti-Husayn rhetoric was essential in maintaining Umayyad legitimacy. During the battle itself, which lasted only a matter of hours, less of

[11] For details on the attitudes of early Muslims towards spreading their ideology and expanding the early Islamic state, see: Donner, *Conquests,* 269-71; -----, *Narratives*, 160-6 (on the *umma* theme); Hodgson, *Venture*, 1:187-230.

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the same type of rhetoric was possible in terms of quantity. Nevertheless, the quality of the rhetoric at the height of the tension on the battlefield appears to have reached a new level unprecedented at any point in the propaganda campaign prior to the battle and unmatched at any point after it.

Among the early correspondences and conversations prior to the battle, a large number of them include Umayyad accusations against Husayn as instigating disunity and civil strife in the Islamic state and going against the collective interest of the Muslim community to the inevitable detriment of Islam.[12] In this portrayal, Ḥusayn's selfishness in desiring the caliphate for himself, rather than considering the collective interest of the Muslim community, is depicted as sufficient proof of his inappropriateness for the caliphate. Even as early as after the death of Ḥusayn's brother, Ḥasan b. 'Alī, people gathered around Ḥusayn urging him to make a move for the caliphate.[13] Mu'āwiya, having heard of this from his informants, wrote directly to Ḥusayn. In his correspondence to Ḥusayn he warned him against separatism and insisted that Ḥusayn not split up the community. [14] Even later, after Mu'āwiya died and Ḥusayn refused to give his oath of allegiance to Yazīd, 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar met with Ḥusayn and insisted on unity, while

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[12] Ibn Sa'd, 54, 57-9 (← IS); Balādhurī, 164 (n.i.); Khwārazmī, 1:220 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham).

[13] The sources all agree that Ḥusayn refused these people, saying that they should all honor the treaty made by his brother Ḥasan and wait as long as Mu'āwiya was still alive.

[14] Ibn Sa'd, 54 (← IS).

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others approached Ḥusayn and insisted that he should not stir up trouble.[15] These accounts make apparent the aggressive insistence on preserving the unity of the community, and the extensive use made of the word *jamā'a* and its significance in historical context. Although some of these relatives who came to Ḥusayn offering advice discouraging him from leading a political movement against Yazīd may have been acting on their own, there are also indications in the early sources that some were not acting independently. Rather, it seems that many may have been 'encouraged' by various members of the Umayyad clan to similarly encourage Ḥusayn to cooperate with the Umayyads. Ibn Sa'd specifically indicates that this was the case for at least one of these relatives. In this account, Ibn Sa'd indicates that Yazīd himself wrote a letter to 'Abdullāh b. 'Abbās, the eldest member of the Hāshimī clan at the time, apparently urging 'Abdullāh b. 'Abbās to confront Ḥusayn and to dissuade him from separatism.[16]

And, just as Mu'āwiya did during his lifetime, 'Amr b. Sa'īd b. al-'Āṣ, then Yazīd's governor at Mecca, is also depicted as having written to Ḥusayn. He sent this letter on the eve of Husayn's departure from Mecca to 'Irāq. In his letter the Umayyad governor also warned Ḥusayn of separatism and encouraged him to preserve the unity of the community. Unlike the threatening tone adopted by Mu'āwiya in his letter to Ḥusayn years before, this letter by the Umayyad governor at Mecca had more of an impassioned

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[15] Ibn Sa'd, 57-8 (← IS).

[16] Ibn Sa'd, 59 (← IS).

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tone, almost pleading for Ḥusayn not to lead the 'Irāqis in rebellion. Nevertheless, it still made use of the same rhetorical vocabulary and used a similar phraseology in denouncing Ḥusayn's actions. [17] Husayn, for his part, refused Amr b. Sa'īd b. al-'Āṣ's advice and decided to continue with his plans to leave Mecca for 'Irāq in any case. When the governor was informed that Ḥusayn's caravan was continuing with its preparations for departure, the governor sent a number of his own guards to prevent Ḥusayn from leaving for 'Irāq. This resulted in the first physical confrontation between Umayyad forces and Ḥusayn's companions, albeit on a relatively small scale. As Ḥusayn's caravan was leaving Mecca, Umayyad soldiers sent by the governor overtook the caravan on the outskirts of the city and blocked their passage. Ḥusayn is depicted as having ordered his men to continue through the Umayyad blockade. The two sides scuffled on horseback, whipping each other with their horsewhips, but without drawing their swords. Ḥusayn and his men eventually pushed through the guards and galloped off towards 'Irāq as the Umayyads shouted after them, "Ḥusayn! Have you decided to leave the *jamā'a*?"[18]

These and numerous similar examples in the early sources depict a clear and deliberate utilization of vocabulary on the part of the Umayyads in a strategic attempt to portray Ḥusayn's actions in terms that would be advantageous to the *status quo*, and thereby to the Umayyad establishment. The deliberate and consistent use of such loaded

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[17] Ibn Sa'd, 59 (← IS); also, Khwārazmī, 218 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham).

[18] Balādhurī, 164 (n.i.); Khwārazmī, 220 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham).

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terminology as 'separatist', 'divisive', and 'leaving the community' served Umayyad interests on a number of levels. On the obvious level, such terminology branded Ḥusayn and his followers in a negative light. The rationale behind separatism, however reasonable, is nearly always overshadowed by the negative connotations of the term itself. This shows conscious application of politically sensitive rhetoric on the part of the Umayyads. Also, on another level, labeling Ḥusayn as a 'separatist' and therefore an illegitimate candidate for political support defines the Umayyads, by default, as the maintainers of unity and community, and thereby the truly legitimate candidates for political support. In other words, because of the rhetorical nature of the terminology itself, the application to Ḥusayn of such negative terms as separatist automatically attributes the Umayyad establishment that he was separating from with the opposite positive qualities. Thus, the rhetoric made the Umayyads the *de facto* representatives of unity and community, without naming them directly.

There are also a numerous references to such rhetoric in later sources, but these have been disregarded in this portion of this study. The vast majority of such references appear for the first time in Khwārazmī's *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn*, indicating possible fabrication. Among these are references to a letter[19] written by Marwān b. al-Ḥakam to

[19] Ibn Sa'd, 54 (← IS); Khwārazmī, 171 (← Aḥmad b A'tham); Ibn 'Asākir, 205 (← Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Bāqī al-Bazzāz ← al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-Shāhid ← Muḥammad b. al-'Abbās al-Khazzāz ← Aḥmad b. Ma'rūf ← al-Ḥusayn b. Faḥm al-Faqīh ← Muḥammad b. Sa'd ← IS. Henceforth: IA-IS, see fig. 3). Note that Ibn Sa'd's version of the Karbalā' narratives is practically identical to that found in Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt*. The fact that Ibn 'Asākir was an Umayyad by genealogy and a resident of the Umayyad

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Mu'āwīya, describing Ḥusayn as a possible source of *fitna*. Another reference appearing for the first time in Khwārazmī's work is to Yazīd's governor at Kūfa, Nu'mān b. Bashīr, fearing potential trouble from Ḥusayn's followers, and announcing from the pulpit to the people that they should take care not to instigate another *fitna* (civil war). [20] In addition, there are a series of correspondences involving Yazīd, Ibn Ziyād, and others, in which such political rhetoric appears. One such instance is a correspondence between Ibn Ziyād and Yazīd which Ibn Ziyād sends along with two messengers delivering the heads of Hāni' b. 'Urwa and Muslim b. 'Aqīl to Yazīd, prior to Ḥusayn's arrival in 'Irāq. In this letter Ibn Ziyād supposedly mentioned that the messengers he sent, as opposed to those whose heads they are delivering, are among the "people of obedience and the practice of the Prophet and the community." [21] Another such example is Yazīd's official letter to be read to the *Ḥajj* pilgrims of that year. The actual text of this letter is unavailable in the sources, but there is mention of the existence of such a letter, and the letter's insistence on unity.[22] Also, after Ḥusayn's departure from Mecca, Khwārazmī embellishes the rhetoric in accounts of incidents at

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capital, in the heartland of the region of strongest Umayyad sentiments and still transmitted almost verbatim such a quantity of clearly Kūfan based, anti-Umayyad information is undeniably a testament not only to his objectivity and to the level of his scholarship, but also a testament to level of his historical consciousness.

[20] Khwārazmī, 197 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); al-Kāmil, 22 (n.i.).

[21] *ahl al-ṭā'a wa al-sunna wa al-jamā'a*. Khwārazmī, 215 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham).

[22] Khwārazmī, 218 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham)

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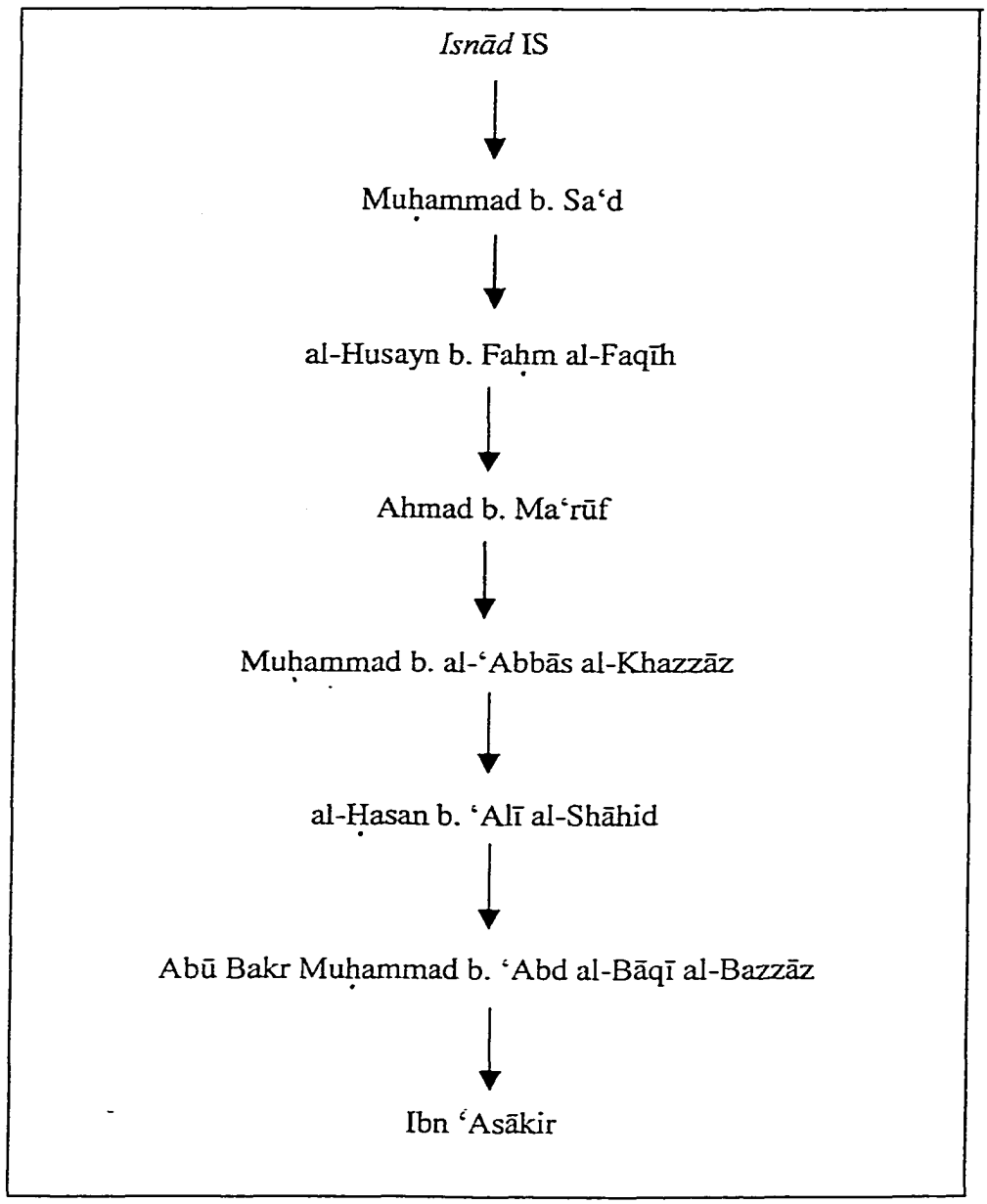

Fig. 3. Ibn 'Asākir *isnād* to Ibn Sa'd ("IA-IS"), see footnote 19 and pp. 48-57.

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Kūfa. The scene of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād at the congregational mosque of Kūfa, for example, is greatly embellished. In this scene, Ibn Ziyād calls for the people to remain obedient to God, the Prophet, and their leaders in addition to calling for unity.[23] The narrative is also much longer than previous depictions, and acquires an almost fictive dramatic element, including a description of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's surrounding himself by a circle of armed soldiers encircling the pulpit with swords drawn, as he propagates such rhetoric among the Kūfans. A similar scenario also appears in Majlisī's *Biḥār*.[24]

Mass-Dissemination of Anti-Ḥusayn Propaganda

The early sources clearly depict the Umayyad use of such propaganda on the level of individual discourse and correspondence as the events leading up to the battle of Karbalā' unfolded. However, a careful examination of the early sources also reveals that, as Ḥusayn came closer and closer to reaching his supporters in 'Irāq, increased tensions between the two sides drove the Umayyads to become more and more intent on spreading their anti-Ḥusayn propaganda to the masses. During this second stage of the development of the Umayyad propaganda campaign, the sources reveal a shift in Umayyad tactics. Whereas the Umayyads had previously directed their rhetoric towards Ḥusayn himself (and occasionally close relatives whom the Umayyads urged to pressure Ḥusayn), once it

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[23] Khwārazmī, 206 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham)

[24] Majlisī, 44:351 (← al-Mufīd).

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became evident that it was not possible to advise or even threaten Ḥusayn into remaining in the Ḥijāz and refusing the leadership offered to him by the rebellious Kūfans, the Umayyad propaganda machine shifted its attention towards neutralizing Ḥusayn's potential base of support in Kūfa and elsewhere. The examples below will demonstrate the sources' agreement that the failure of attempts to prevent Ḥusayn from leaving the Ḥijāz resulted in a propaganda campaign focusing on alienating Ḥusayn from the thousands of Kūfans who had already written to him pledging to him their oath of allegiance and well as their swords. In fact, the sources show that it was specifically for this purpose that, upon hearing of Ḥusayn's departure for Kūfa and sensing the potential danger of his arrival there, Yazīd ordered his governor at Basra, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, to take control of Kūfa and prepare for Ḥusayn's arrival. Indeed, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's arrival in and capture of Kūfa is the historical event that marks the second phase of the propaganda campaign against Ḥusayn: the mass-dissemination[25] of the Umayyad anti-Ḥusayn propaganda among the Kūfans.

Even before the caliphate of Yazīd, the most efficient tools for mass-dissemination of information of any kind in early Islam were the pulpits of congregational mosques throughout the central Islamic lands. In fact, the significance of the *minbar*

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[25] This particular factor of modern propaganda studies is stressed in: Ḥasan Ḥasan, *al-I'lām wa al-dawla* (Beirut: Maktabat Ṣādir, 1965), 7-17, 42-79, and 138-194; Jowett and O'Donnell, 97-160; Lerner, 316-328, and 416-434; Iḥsān Ṭabarī, *Du maqāleh darbāre-ye tablīghāt* (Germany: Enteshārāt-e Sāzmān-e Havādārān-e Ḥizb-e Tūdeh, 1982).

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(pulpit) as both a symbol of authority and as a means of mass-dissemination of information was not new to the Umayyads during the events of the battle of Karbalā'. The Prophet himself made use of a raised platform that served as a primitive *minbar* for precisely those same purposes.[26] Certain historic pronouncements made by the Prophet, such as the declaration of the illegality of alcohol, were made from the *minbar*, and such usage of the *minbar* as a medium for public announcement seems to have been prior to its significance as purely a pulpit for religious exhortation. C. H. Becker notes that it was only towards the end of the Umayyad period that the *minbar* acquired the purely religious purpose of a congregational pulpit. [27] Becker also notes that, during the lifetime of the Prophet himself, and throughout the early Islamic period, the *minbar* was, for all practical purposes, the 'throne' of the Prophet, as a mighty ruler of Arabia, from which public announcements were made. The significance of the *minbar* as such is evident from the fact that Mu'āwiya wanted to take the Prophet's *minbar*-throne to Syria with him, as did later caliphs such as 'Abd al-Malik and al-Walīd.[28] And, Goldziher mentions that the

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[26] *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, "*minbar,*" (J. Pedersen). The author indicates that many take it for granted that the *minbar* was for the Friday sermon, while some sources indicate that its purpose was more for the acoustical effect of allowing the large audience to hear the Prophet.

[27] C.H. Becker, "Die Kanzel im Kultus des alten Islam," *Orientalische Studien Theodor Nöldeke zum siebzigsten Geburtstag*, v. 1 (Gieszen: A. Töpelmann, 1906), 344-7. See also Becker's other works, *Vom Werden und Wesen der islamischen Welt: Islamstudien*, (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1924-32), and *Das Erbe der Antike im Orient und Okziden* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1931).

[28] Ferdinand Wüstenfeld, *Das gebiet von Madīna, nach arabischen geographen beschrieben* (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1873), 63. See also: Tabarī, 5:238-40.

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minbar's symbolic representation of the authority of the ruler naturally led to the Umayyads' desire to have *minbar*s of their own, just as their predecessors had. [29] In addition to these examples, Mu'āwiya's taking his personal *minbar* with him when he traveled from Damascus to Mecca is also an indication that the *minbar* was not only a means of mass-communication, but had also become a symbol of authority. All of these factors, supported by numerous historical examples, indicate that the *minbar* was not only useful for making public announcements. The symbolic authority of the *minbar*, coupled with its functionality in disseminating information to large audiences made it the ideal medium for spreading propaganda. In fact, when considering the *minbar*'s power as a symbol of the authority of the ruler, then according to the social scientific definition of the term, the *minbar* itself can be considered a piece of propaganda. When these facts are taken advantage of by an organized entity with a central authority such as the early Umayyad caliphate, networks of regional governors on *minbar*s in local mosques could have been (and as we shall see from evidence in the Karbalā'-related sources, were) organized to form a vast and efficient network capable of mass-dissemination of propaganda on a scale unprecedented in Islamic history.

With regard to the events of the battle of Karbalā', the Umayyads were quick to make use of the *minbars* in Damascus, Mecca, Madīna, Kūfa, and Basra to spread anti-Ḥusayn propaganda designed to break down the aura of piety/genealogy consciousness

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[29] Ignác Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, v. 2 (London: Allen & Unwin, 1967), 42.

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surrounding Ḥusayn. As is evident from the following examples, it is, in fact, a phenomenon that is one of the most recurrent themes in the sources. Even after Ḥusayn departed from Mecca, Yazīd's newly-appointed governor at Kūfa, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, in order to quell potential insurrection by the supporters of Ḥusayn, is depicted as having climbed the pulpit of the congregational mosque and continued the Umayyad polemic of calling for unity, and warning the people of civil strife and separatism.[30] He is shown as having continued the Umayyad polemic, playing on the sentiments of the Kūfans, and after making certain that the threat of rebellion had been subdued he began a rhetorical denunciation of Ḥusayn in front of his followers. According to later sources, he even went so far as to declare that the blood of the enemies of the Umayyads was *ḥalāl* (lawful to be shed).[31] This is a scenario that is depicted again and again in each of the Karbalā'-related sources, with only slight variations in later sources.[32]

However, it is interesting to note that the pulpit propaganda in particular appears in the early sources at junctions in the Karbalā'-related narratives where one of Ḥusayn's several messengers to Kūfa is captured by the Umayyads. The Umayyads, after having intercepted one of these messengers, either initiate the rhetorical denunciation of Ḥusayn

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[30] Ṭabarī, 372 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Mujālid b. Sa'īd).

[31] al-Kāmil, 25 (n.i.).

[32] Khwārazmī's is the only exception. It is the only source that includes numerous embellishments and even possible fabrications.

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themselves from the pulpit, or force the captured messenger to do so.[33] The first such instance is when Ḥusayn's first messenger to Kūfa, Muslim b. 'Aqīl, was captured by 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād. Muslim b. 'Aqīl was then brought to the pulpit and accused of gathering arms and recruiting fighters to revolt against the Umayyad caliphate. After repeated attempts at coercing Muslim b. 'Aqīl to denounce Ḥusayn publicly from the pulpit of the congregational mosque, and after realizing that Muslim would not submit, Ibn Ziyād threatened to kill Muslim in "a more violent manner than anyone has ever been killed before." [34] The later sources also include similar episodes, but add another rhetorical exchange involving the consumption of alcohol.[35]

Indeed, the sources agree that 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād kept his promise and killed Ibn 'Aqīl, but what is more interesting is that the Karbalā'-related sources describe a clear shift in the political and propaganda tactics of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād from this point in the

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[33] Note that these accounts bear some thematic similarities to the accounts of Mu'āwiya's interrogation of Ḥijr b. 'Adīy (see: Ṭabarī, 5:253-270). Whether these interrogations in the Karbalā' narratives are variations of an already-existing literary topos or actual historical events is uncertain. We can only say with certainty that they appear quite consistently in the Karbalā' narratives.

[34] Ṭabarī, 377 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Sa'īd b. Mudrik b. 'Umāra); Khwārazmī, 212 (same *isnād*); Iṣfahānī, 109 (←Abū Mikhnaf ← Sa'īd b. Mudrik b. 'Umāra, and ← Abū Qudāma b. Sa'd).

[35] In these later sources, Ibn Ziyād accuses Muslim of having drunk liquor. [al-Kāmil, 35 (n.i.); Majlisī, 44:356-7 (← al-Mufīd)]. One possible explanation for this discrepancy between the earlier and later sources may be that later Shī'ī sources attempted to portray the Umayyads' accusation of a person of 'known virtue' of alcoholism as an example of just how low the Umayyads would go to accomplish their goals. Indeed, the entire portrayal of the killing of Ḥusayn serves this purpose.

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narratives and onward. This shift in the tactics of 'Ubaydullāh b Ziyād, as described consistently in nearly all the Karbalā'-related narratives, fit exactly into yet another category of propaganda. The *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* defines 'propaganda of the deed' as:

> The performance of a non-symbolic (e.g., coercive or economic) act, not primarily for its military or economic effects but primarily for the symbolic effect it presumably wil have on some reactor—for instance, staging the public torture of a criminal for its presumable deterrent effect on others or giving economic 'foreign aid' with more of an eye to influencing a recipient's opinions than to building his economy.[36]

With regards to the Karbalā'-related narratives, the sources agree that, after the propagation of anti-Husayn rhetoric from the pulpit, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād publicly executed and decapitated Muslim b. 'Aqīl at the top of the castle and ordered both Muslim's head and his decapitated body to be thrown down to the main public street below for all the Kūfans to see. In addition, Hāni' b. 'Urwa al-Murādī, the Kūfan tribal leader of Murād who hosted Muslim b. 'Aqīl, was also publicly executed.[37] Hāni', however, was ordered by Ibn Ziyād to be executed at the sheep market of Kūfa, a

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[36] David Sills, ed, *The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: Crowell Collier and Macmillan, 1968), 12:579. Interestingly enough, it is also mentioned that "diplomatic negotiation, [and] legal argument... are likely to include considerable elements of both 'propaganda' and 'propaganda of the deed' as here defined."

[37] *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, "Hāni' b. 'Urwa al-Murādī," (L. Veccia Vaglieri), mentions that Hāni' was influential among the Yamanī tribes of Kūfa, including Madhḥij, Kinda, and Hamdān. Also, Mukhtār b. Abī 'Ubayd al-Thaqafī who, over a year later was to lead a rebellion taking southern 'Irāq back from Umayyad control, was jailed along with Hāni' b. Urwa.

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deliberately chosen and disgraceful end, as if telling the rebellious Kūfans that any who challenged Umayyad authority would be slaughtered like sheep. This is particularly important in light of the fact that Hāni' b. 'Urwa was no ordinary citizen of Kūfa. Rather, he was leader of a tribe of thousands, and there can be little doubt that the fact that 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād would have so boldly dared to kill one of such high esteem and with so many supporters as Hāni' must have made quite an impact on 'ordinary' Kūfans.[38] Both of these examples mark the beginning of a new stage in the developing Umayyad propaganda against Ḥusayn, in which the use of 'propaganda of the deed' became yet another weapon in the Umayyad arsenal against the piety/geneaology consciousness of Ḥusayn, and it is one that continued to be utilized along with their continually-developing verbal propaganda campaign.

However, in addition to Ḥusayn's first messenger to Kūfa, Muslim b. 'Aqīl, Ḥusayn had sent a number of other messengers at various intervals during his trip from Mecca to 'Irāq, and prior to receiving the news that Muslim b. 'Aqīl was killed. With Ḥusayn's second messenger to Kūfa, similar scenarios appear in the sources, again with rhetorical exchanges between the 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād and the messengers at the pulpit of the congregational mosque. By this point in the narratives, however, Ibn Ziyād had

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[38] Ibn Sa'd, 66 Hāni' is killed on the spot (← IS); Balādhurī, 224 (← Sa'īd b. Sulaymān ← 'Abbād b. al-'Awām ← Ḥusayn); Dīnawarī, 238 (n.i.); Khwārazmī, 214 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); al-Kāmil, 29 (n.i.); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 21 (n.i.); Siyar a'lām, 299 (← SA-IS); Tārīkh al-Islam, 4:170-1(← al-Mujālid ← al-Sha'bī, and ← al-Wāqidī ← *min 'iddati turuqin*); Ibn Ḥajar, 80 ('Ammār b. Mu'āwīya al-Duhnī ← Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn); Majlisī, 44:358 (← al-Mufīd).

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already defused Muslim b. 'Aqīl's uprising, killed both Muslim and Hāni' b. 'Urwa and established firm control over Kūfa. From this point on, the Umayyad polemic is depicted as having shifted from one of calls for unity and warnings against division to direct, vile, and personal attacks on the character of Ḥusayn himself, in an obvious attempt to diminish the aura of piety and genealogy consciousness with which the public endowed Ḥusayn and to prevent the Kūfans from supporting him in any way. Beginning with Ḥusayn's second messenger to Kūfa, after he was captured and brought to Ibn Ziyād and after a rhetorical exchange during his interrogation, Ibn Ziyād ordered the messenger to climb the pulpit and curse "the habitual liar and son of the habitual liar," referring to Ḥusayn and his father, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.[39] This messenger, like the others, refused to denounce Ḥusayn from the pulpit and Ibn Ziyād ordered him to be thrown from the top of the castle to his death. Again, these are clear examples of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's attempts to capitalize on the political potential of the moment by publicizing the messengers' killings and benefiting from the 'propaganda of the deed,' in addition to stepping up the rhetorical campaign against Ḥusayn. In the depictions of the third messenger, after a similar scenario between him and 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād at the pulpit, he was thrown from the roof, landing and breaking his bones, but still alive and able to speak. Though physically mangled, he continued to curse Ibn Ziyād, Yazīd, and the

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[39] *Al-kadhdhāb ibn al-kadhdhāb,* Ibn Sa'd, 68 (← IS); Balādhurī, 168 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 395 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Muḥammad b. Qays); Khwārazmī, 228 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); al-Kāmil, 41 (n.i.); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 31 (n.i.).

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Umayyads aloud for the gathering crowd to hear. Then, one of Ibn Ziyād's soldiers rushed out of the castle and decapitated him.[40] The last and final messenger is portrayed as having been captured just days before Ḥusayn's awaited arrival in Kūfa. This messenger, upon being taken to the pulpit and ordered to denounce the 'habitual liar and son of a habitual liar,' agreed to do ascend the pulpit, and did so, unlike the previous messengers who were executed for refusing even to ascend. But, after ascending the pulpit and gaining the attention of the gathered crowd, rather than cursing Ḥusayn and his father in that manner, he attributed the same insults to Yazīd and his father Mu'āwiya.[41] He then began to call upon the crowd to go to help Ḥusayn and informed them of Ḥusayn's proximity to Kūfa, but was attacked by Umayyad guards and forcibly removed from the pulpit. Then, as with Ḥusayn's other messengers to Kūfa, he was forced to the top of the castle and publicly executed.

It is clear from these and other examples in the early sources that the Umayyad rhetoric and propaganda, which began as calls for unity and warnings against separatism originally addressed directly to Ḥusayn and his inner circle, eventually began to develop into a full-fledged propaganda campaign aimed at the masses. The use of the pulpit then functioned as the perfect medium for the efficient dissemination of Umayyad rhetoric

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[40] *Al-kadhdhāb ibn al-kadhdhāb.* Ṭabarī, 398 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Abū 'Alī al-Anṣārī ← Bakr b. Mus'ab al Muzanī).

[41] Intersetingly, this is the first example in the sources of a reveral of Umayyad rhetoric on the part of a Ḥusayn supporter.

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calling for unity and warning against civil strife. In addition, the imminent approach of Ḥusayn and increasing tensions in Kūfa eventually led to increasingly harsh responses from Yazīd's governor there, and to the development of a new phase in the Umayyad propaganda campaign against Ḥusayn. This new phase was clearly marked by the consistent and deliberate use of 'propaganda of the deed' by 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād and his Umayyad supporters in order to dissuade Ḥusayn's potential supporters in Kūfa from continuing their support of Ḥusayn. However, as Ḥusayn's advance towards Kūfa continued, and as tensions grew, the Umayyad anti-Ḥusayn propaganda continued, becoming increasingly focused on breaking down the people's piety and genealogy consciousness of Ḥusayn. Although calls for unity and warnings against separatism continued, this new phase was marked by a clear shift in the Umayyad polemic designed not only to distance Ḥusayn from his supporters, but also aimed at preparing the populace for the events to come.

Intensification of Anti-Ḥusayn Propaganda at Karbalā'

After preparing the Kūfan public for the confrontation at Karbalā', the early sources show that this Umayyad polemic continued at the scene of the battle itself in an attempt to maintain army support against Ḥusayn. This was accomplished by continuing calls for obedience and unity, and by what was to become a key characteristic of the next phase of Umayyad propaganda: stripping Ḥusayn of legitimacy in the eyes of the troops.

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Furthermore, whereas previous Umayyad propaganda was designed to strip Ḥusayn of legitimacy as a candidate for leadership, it is apparent that in this next phase the Umayyad rhetoric began to go a step further and brought into question even Ḥusayn's claims to be a Muslim. Even the earliest, least adulterated accounts of the day of the battle portray such intense tension within the ranks of the soldiers gathered to fight Ḥusayn that it is easy to understand how the moment could have been siezed by both sides involved for their own purposes. It is quite clear from the sources that both Ḥusayn and the Umayyad generals were well aware of this fact, as there is evidence that both sides attempted to capitalize on the tension. Ḥusayn, for his part, took full advantage of this tension at its height on the day of 'Āshūrā' itself, in order to reverse some of the Umayyad rhetoric with counter-propaganda of his own, by attempting to reinforce in the soldiers gathered against him that very same aura of piety and genealogy consciousness with which they once viewed him. Similarly, the Umayyads also siezed the moment and took full advantage of the heightened tension amongst the troops in order to maintain their sentiments in the Umayyads' favor. However, as opposed to the previous Umayyad propaganda, which was designed merely to neutralize Ḥusayn's aura of piety and genealogy consciousness, the sources show that by this point in the narratives the Umayyads began to propagate rhetoric that was clearely aimed at *destroying* Ḥusayn's aura of piety consciousness altogether.

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The development of this new phase of Umayyad anti-Ḥusayn rhetoric is apparent from several scenarios that appear in the narratives of the days when Ḥusayn's camp was beseiged at Karbalā', and narratives of the day of the battle itself. For example, in one instance when one of Ḥusayn's followers recites a Qur'ānic verse (And God would not leave the believers in a situation like that which you are in, until the good are distinguished from the evil, Qur'ān, 3:179),[42] the Umayyad troops interrupt, rebutting that they themselves are the good ones, and Husayn's camp are the evil ones.[43] This serves to show the level that the Umayyad anti-Ḥusayn rhetoric had reached by that point in the narratives. Ḥusayn was no longer being portrayed as merely selfish, but now Umayyad propaganda was going so far as portraying him as altogether evil. Whether the soldier in question was an Umayyad instigating anti-Ḥusayn rhetoric, or a new recruit who was affected by it, the scene demonstrates quite clearly the extreme polarization that had been achieved by the two camps and the success of the Umayyad propaganda campaign in painting Ḥusayn in such a bad light that some considered him to be the evil referred to in the Qur'ānic verse. This shows just how much the troops were affected by the Umayyad propaganda against Ḥusayn, and that they were by this stage of the

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[42] The next section of this study will discuss in detail the usage of Qur'ānic verses as a rhetorical tool and as a propaganda device, a phenomenon which is itself quite intersting.

[43] *Mā kāna Allāhu liyadhar al-mu'minīn 'alā mā antum 'alayhi hattā yamīza al-khabītha min al-ṭayyibi"* (Qur'ān, 3:179). Tabarī, 421 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← 'Abdullāh b. 'Āsim ← al-Dahhāk b. 'Abdullāh al-Mishraqī); Khwārazmī, 251 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham).

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developing Umayyad polemic ready and willing to set aside their piety and genealogy consciousness of Ḥusayn in order to do battle with him.

Umayyad tactics during the battle of Karbalā' itself also corroborate the theory that the Umayyads developed a new polemic designed to instigate the troops against Ḥusayn, such that his aura of piety consicousness would not hinder them from shedding his blood. Among these examples are references to Ḥusayn as one responsible for leaving the faith, and manipulating the religion to his own advantage. [44] Such examples were clearly a direct assault on Ḥusayn's character as the supposedly pious grandson of the Prophet and aura of piety/genealogy consciousness with which he was viewed by the people. Coupled with the slough of pro-unity and anti-separatism rhetoric that flooded the ears of the Muslims from the pulpits in the weeks prior to the battle, such accusations basically amounted to corruption charges against Ḥusayn, and implications of more than merely self-interest in his seeking leadership, at the expense of the interests of the Islamic community as a whole. In fact, just before the point in the narratives where this accusation is made, the troops were reminded to remain obedient to their leaders, and maintain their unity,[45] before discouraging the troops from being hesitant about killing one who has left the faith. Thus, Ḥusayn was beginning to be depicted as not only an

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[44] *man maraqa fī al-dīn.* Tabarī, 435 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Ḥusayn b. 'Uqba al-Murādī ← al-Zubaydī), and Khwārazmī, 2:15 (← Abū Mikhnaf).

[45] *Ilzimū ṭā'atakum wa jamā'atakum.* Ṭabarī, 435 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Ḥusayn b. 'Uqba al-Murādī ← al-Zubaydī), and Khwārazmī, 2:15 (← Abū Mikhnaf).

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obstacle to unity in the community, but as having left the faith,[46] corrupting others, and therefore being a source of evil worthy of being killed.

There is also evident in later sources assorted other anti-Ḥusayn rhetoric[47] that attempted to portray Ḥusayn as one who, in addition to causing division in the community, had lost track of religion, and later sources even add accusations of delusion.[48] This last tactic of putting Ḥusayn's mental stability under question is one that appears particularly in narratives of the day of 'Āshūrā', during the actual battle itself, when Ḥusayn attempted to revive the army's awareness of his aura of piety/genealogy consiousness. Ironically, Ḥusayn's own calls for the troops to remember his own piety/genealogy consciousness were almost always twisted by the Umayyad polemic against Ḥusayn. Rather than denying his genealogy (which was practically impossible) the Umayyad polemic was so cleverly designed at this point that it continued to challenge his piety consciousness (accusing him of disregarding the interests of the community) and used Ḥusayn's claims of genealogy consciousness against him by creating corroborating evidence accusing Ḥusayn of abusing his own genealogy. The Umayyad polemic at this point began to weave the two factors together in accusations against Ḥusayn, alleging that

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[46] *wa lā tartābū fī qatli man maraqa fī al-dīn.* Ṭabarī, 435 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Ḥusayn b. 'Uqba al-Murādī ← al-Zubaydī), and Khwārazmī, 2:15 (← Abū Mikhnaf).

[47] Same as Ṭabarī and Khwārazmī, but adds "*wa khālafa al-imām,*" Majlisī, 45:19 (← al-Mufīd and Muḥammad b. Abī Ṭālib).

[48] Khwārazmī, 253 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham).

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he had not only lost track of his own grandfather's teachings, but was also attempting to abuse his blood relations with the Prophet to 'play' with the religion and the religious believers to his own personal advantage.[49] The Umayyad propaganda was at this point informing the soldiers that they were fighting a Ḥusayn that was different from that pious grandson of the Prophet whom they imagined him to be. This Ḥusayn was one who was forsaking the good of the community as a whole for his own advantage, and attempting to manipulate the religion of his grandfather for his own purposes. Such rhetoric was designed to, and apparently succeeded in, causing the troops not only to be self-conscious and wary of supporting what they then began to view as Ḥusayn's pseudo-religious movement, but also to become convinced that this pseudo-religious movement was a definite threat to 'true' Islam, and needed to be eradicated. The intended end result of this new phase of propaganda was an army that not only refused to support a Ḥusayn whose aura of piety consciousness was neutralized, but one that was ready and willing to

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[49] Another example is quite similar in nature to what Donner refers to as the "two brothers topos" (see Donner, *Narratives*, 269). On the day of the battle itself, an Umayyad soldier whose brother was killed earlier in the day fighting in defense of Ḥusayn, comes to Ḥusayn saying, " Oh Ḥusayn, liar son of a liar, you deceived my brother and led him astray until you killed him!" (*Yā Ḥusayn, yā kadhdhāb ibn al-Kadhdhāb! Aḍlalta akhī wa gharartahu ḥattā qataltahu*) Ṭabarī, 434 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Thābit b. Hubayra), and al-Kāmil, 67 (n.i.). This simultaneously shows the Ummayad propaganda at work on several different levels. First, this soldier repeats the same insult that was so often repeated by 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād from the pulpit at Kūfa in the weeks just prior to the battle. In fact, it seems that it may have been repeated so often that it became a sort of slogan or nickname for Ḥusayn by his Umayyad enemies. But also, on another level, it shows that there was a view that whoever was with Ḥusayn was somehow duped and misled from the majority opinion.

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shed the blood of a corrupt Ḥusayn whose piety consciousness was eliminated altogether and who was made to appear selfish and impious.

An even more striking example of this occurs at a point in the narrations when, during the battle of Karbalā' itself, the sun reached the proper position in the sky for the noon prayer and Ḥusayn asked the Umayyads to allow a recess from fighting in order to perform the noon prayer. The narratives report that Ḥusayn b. al-Tamīm, leader of the Umayyad guard at Kūfa, responded, "It [the prayer of Ḥusayn and his followers] will not be accepted."[50] Such a response is a most striking example of the effectiveness of Umayyad propaganda at destroying Husayn's aura of piety and genealogy consciousness. Such dramatic shifts in the attitude towards Ḥusayn are even more remarkable when noting that just weeks prior to the battle, Ḥusayn's aura of piety and genealogy consciousness was such that not even the boldest Umayyads dared to utter such an accusation to the 'pious' grandson of the Prophet. The fact that such a statement could be made during the battle is itself an indication of the success of the Umayyad propaganda campaign in destroying Ḥusayn's aura of piety/genealogy consciousness by that point in the narratives. In fact, the Umayyad campaign appears to have been so successful that, within a matter of weeks it was able to convince[51] tens of thousands of Kūfans to bear

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[50] *Innahā la tuqbal!* Ṭabarī, 439 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Sulaymān b. Abī Rāshid ← Ḥamīd b. Muslim); Khwārazmī, 2:17 (← Abū Mikhnaf); al-Kāmil, 70 (n.i.); Majlisī, 45:21 (← al-Mufīd and Muḥammad b. Abī Ṭālib).

[51] As shall be discussed in the next section, bribes and threats were, along with the propaganda, a major contribution to the recruit of these Kūfans. However, because the

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arms and mobilize militarily against the very man whose piety and genealogy consciousness attracted their oaths of allegiance only weeks earlier. The evidence as provided in the early sources is quite compelling in this regard. In fact, no one can disagree that the mere fact that the battle of Karbalā' even occurred at all is itself a grand testament to the Umayyad's mastery of the full capabilities of their propaganda resources.

After Karbalā': The Final Stage of Umayyad Propaganda

In spite of the apparent success of the Umayyad anti-Ḥusayn propaganda both prior to and during the battle of Karbalā', it seems that, after the murder of Ḥusayn, a combination of popular public opinion and perhaps guilt on the part of many of the soldiers led to a resurfacing of the piety and genealogy consciousness that had surrounded Ḥusayn, and made it necessary for the Umayyad establishment to create and propagate a new anti-Ḥusayn polemic appropriate to the new situation in which they found themselves. Being that the Umayyad propaganda campaign's most vile accusations against Ḥusayn (those that were aimed at destroying his aura of piety/genealogy consciousness altogether) were focused on the soldiers that were present at Karbalā', it was these troops that were the most 'prepared' for the shedding of Ḥusayn's blood. Unlike these soldiers, however, the vast majority of the population of Muslims in the urban centers were not so prepared. The Umayyad propaganda campaign had not directed

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significant role of the rhetoric of the Umayyad propaganda in this regard, the word 'coerce' was not used here for the role of the propaganda in convincing the Kūfans.

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the latest phase of propaganda (that of destroying Ḥusayn's piety/genealogy consciousness altogether) towards the civilian population off the battlefield. For these civilian masses, their last taste of Umayyad anti-Ḥusayn propaganda had been efforts merely to neutralize his piety/genealogy consciousness so that he would no longer be attractive as a candidate for leadership of the community. Being that the nature of this 'civilian' polemic was so radically different from that of the battlefield propaganda which depicted Ḥusayn as an evil, pseudo-Muslim leader of a band of similarly evil pseudo-Muslims, much of the civilian population seems to have expected the battle to result in no more than preventing Ḥusayn from acquiring leadership. Thus, as the following examples will show, although the Umayyad battlefield propaganda served its purpose at Karbalā' by preparing the soldiers for Ḥusayn's death, its ignoring the general public appears to have resulted in a sort of aftershock after the battle, when the news of the outcome of the battle of Karbalā' reached the general public. Although by then it was certainly too late to have done anything to prevent it, the Umayyads' killing of Ḥusayn was no less of a surprise to the public at large. The public's amazement at the fact that the Umayyads had gone so far as to kill Ḥusayn and his companions then appears to have posed yet another challenge to the Umayyad propaganda machine, and there are clear indications in the depictions in the early sources that this new dynamic necessitated a new polemic designed to legitimize the killing of Ḥusayn and thereby to maintain the Umayyads' own legitimacy.

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The sources are rife with such references of Umayyad post-Karbalā' legitimation of Ḥusayn's murder, including post-Karbalā' reactions at Kūfa, Damascus, and Madīna. The prime examples of these occur when the prisoners of Ḥusayn's camp are taken back to Kūfa to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, and later, to Damascus to Yazīd himself. Such scenes are telling, not only for the ways in which the authors depict the scenes, but also for their portrayals of the interaction between the surviving members of Ḥusayn's camp and the Umayyad leadership. Another interesting aspect of these narrations is that they are included in almost every account of the events of the battle of Karbalā'. Whereas some sources seem to copy-edit the narratives, excluding certain accounts that were deemed unneccesary by the author, such accounts of the post-Karbalā' interaction between the defeated but surviving Hāshimīs and the Umayyad victors seem to be used by the sources as a sort of natural conclusion to the events of Karbalā'.

When the prisoners of Ḥusayn's camp were marched to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād in Kūfa, they were brought before the governor, who is depicted as having immediately initiated a rhetorical argument legitimizing the killing of Ḥusayn. When asking 'Alī b. Ḥusayn his name,[52] 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād asked rhetorically, "Didn't God kill 'Alī at Karbalā'?" marking the first indications of Umayyad post-Karbalā' legitimation of

[52] Ḥusayn named all three of his sons 'Alī, partly in response to Mu'āwiya's constant cursing of 'Alī from the pulpits during his reign. Thus, Ḥusayn appears to have propagated the name among his own children, in defiance of Mu'āwiya and as an example to others, in a sort of propaganda campaign of his own. As a result of this, there is great confusion to this day, even among Shī'ī scholars themselves, as to precisely which of the three 'Alīs survived the battle of Karbalā' and became their fourth *imām*.

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Ḥusayn's killing. 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's statement implies not only that Ḥusayn had become corrupt and thereby an enemy of God, but also that it was with God's assistance (in this case, by God's own will) that the Umayyads were successful in defeating Ḥusayn and his companions. This marks the beginning of *jabrī* reasoning used by the Umayyads to legitimize the killing of Ḥusayn. The surviving 'Alī then reponded, "People (the army) killed him." apparently aware of, and attempting to neutralize Ibn Ziyād's polemical tactic. Ibn Ziyād seems to have realized this and began to insist that God was the one who killed Ḥusayn, and the two continued back and forth until Ibn Ziyād called for 'Alī's execution. When Zaynab d. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib intervened, Ibn Ziyād eventually decided to leave them be.[53] This scenario is repeated almost verbatim in Balādhurī.[54] Furthermore, Ṭabarī also includes the same basic story, but indicates that when Ibn Ziyād initiated his rhetoric, 'Alī b. Ḥusayn responded with Qur'ānic verses.[55] Although it appears only in later accounts of Hāshimī-Umayyad interaction at Kūfa, the appearance of such Qur'ānic rhetoric in even the earliest accounts of Hāshimī-Umayyad interaction at Damascus is a relatively solid indication that this marked the appearance of the next major shift in the propaganda of the events of the battle of Karbalā': one in which verses of the Qur'ān are

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[53] Ibn Sa'd, 79 (← IS).

[54] Balādhurī, 207 (← *ba'ḍ al-ṭālibīyyīn*)

[55] The use of Qur'ānic verses as rhetoric and propaganda appears to be an interesting topic for dissertation research in itself, though beyond the scope of the research of this study.

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used by the Umayyads to legitimize their actions, and by the Hāshimīs to defend themselves.[56] Certainly, in light of the evident success of the Umayyad propaganda campaign up to that point in the narratives, it is not difficult to see why the Hāshimīs would resort to a Qur'ānic defense. After all, what could be more legitimate in the eyes of the early Islamic community than the Qur'ān? Even if piety and genealogy consciousness can be neutralized (and even destroyed altogether) by fierce Umayyad propaganda, the Umayyads could not by any means de-legitimize the word of God.[57]

That may have been precisely why, in response to Ibn Ziyād's accusations, ʿAlī b. Ḥusayn is depicted as having responded, "God takes the souls when they die."[58] To this Qur'ānic rhetoric Ibn Ziyād himself is depicted as having responded by quoting a Qur'ānic verse of his own, "And no soul was able to die except with the permission of God, written and decreed."[59] Both examples show an attempt to use Qur'ānic verses either to defend, or to legitimate the actions of each party. ʿAlī b. Ḥusayn's verse implied that Ḥusayn's soul was in God's hands, while 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's verse implied that if

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[56] As shall become evident, the phenomenon of using Qur'ānic verses to legitimate actions or reactions is clearly not an authorial construction on Ṭabarī's part. Earlier sources include it quite consistently, though not in the context of Ibn Ziyād's interrogation of the survivors of the battle of Karbalā'.

[57] Apparently, the Umayyads' similar use of Qur'ānic rhetoric was for the precisely the same reasons; no one could challenge the word of God.

[58] *Allahu yatawaffā al-anfusa ḥīna mawtihā.* (Qur'ān, 39:42) Ṭabarī, 458 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Sulaymān b. Abī Rāshid ← Ḥamīd b. Muslim).

[59] *Ma kāna li-nafsin an tamūta illā bi 'idhni Allāhi kitāban mu'ajjalā.* (Qur'ān 3:145), Ṭabarī, 458 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Sulaymān b. Abī Rāshid ← Ḥamīd b. Muslim).

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Husayn had not deserved his bloody fate at the battle of Karbalā', God would never have allowed it to occur. In addition, Ṭabarī's account adds a rhetorical interrogation of Zaynab d. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib by Ibn Ziyād, where he once again deligitimizes Ḥusayn as an enemy of God, initiating the rhetoric by thanking "God who exposed, humiliated, and killed you [Hāshimīs], and proved your words to be lies."[60] He then adds another rhetorical question by Ibn Ziyād addressed to Zaynab d. 'Alī, "How do you like what God has done to your brother and your household?"[61] This addition then enters the Ibn al-Athīr's depiction,[62] which itself carries over into that of Ibn Ṭāwūs, with the addition of " God has relieved my heart of your tyrannical Ḥusayn and the disobedience of the apostacy of your household." [63] Also, in depicting the confrontation between Ibn Ziyād and 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, Ibn Ṭāwūs used only the earliest versions, leaving out the Qur'ānic rhetorical interchange between the two figures, and Majlisī did the same.[64]

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[60] *Alhamdulillāh al-ladhī faḍhahakum wa qattalakum wa akdhaba ahdūthatakum*, Ṭabarī, 457 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Sulaymān b. Abī Rāshid ← Ḥamīd b. Muslim); Khwārazmī, 2:42 (← Abū Mikhnaf).

[61] *Kayfa ra'ayti ma ṣana'a Allāhu bi akhīki wa ahli baytiki.* Ṭabarī, 457 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Sulaymān b. Abī Rāshid ← Ḥamīd b. Muslim); Khwārazmī, 2:42 (← Abū Mikhnaf).

[62] al-Kāmil, 82 (n.i.)

[63] *Laqad shafiya Allāhu qalbī min ṭāghiyyatiki al-Ḥusayn wa al-'uṣāti al-marādati min ahli baytik.* Ṭabarī, 457 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Sulaymān b. Abī Rāshid ← Ḥamīd b. Muslim); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 67 (n.i.).

[64] Ibn Ṭāwūs, 68 (n.i.); Majlisī, 45:115 and 117 (← Ibn Ṭāwūs).

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Although the wording of the accounts differs slightly as the sources evolve, the main rhetorical device used by 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, that of legitimation of Ḥusayn's murder by attribution of Umayyad success at Karbalā' to the help of God, appears consistently from the earliest sources all the way up to the latest. The fact that some of the later, and even early pro-Shī'ī sources refrain from including Qur'ānic rhetoric in their depictions but only include the voices of the characters involved does not necessarily indicate that the Qur'ānic rhetoric was a polemic device inserted by later historiographic tradition.[65] The use of Qur'ānic post-Karbalā' rhetoric in the earliest available source, even though it is not in the context of a rhetorical battle between 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād and 'Alī b. Ḥusayn, disproves that theory. Rather, it seems that the pro-Shī'ī sources both before and after Ṭabarī neglect to mention the Qur'ānic rhetoric during the rhetorical confrontation between the surviving Hāshimītes and 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, possibly because of the unquestionable rhetorical power that Qur'ānic verses seemed to have given the Umayyad governor. Thus, it seems that such authors as Balādhurī saw it appropriate to leave out the Qur'ānic rhetoric altogether, preferring instead to put into 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's mouth words that could be considered his own, and therefore of questionable character. In this regard, it appears that later Shī'ī or pro-Shī'ī authors followed suit, apparently for the same reasons. However, none of the sources seem able to deny the

[65] There is evidence of the existence of such Qur'ānic rhetoric in even the earliest available written source, as shall be clarified below, in the discussion of the sources' depictions of rhetoric at Yazīd's court in Damascus.

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Umayyad post-Karbalā' legitimation rhetoric as such, whether in the form of Qur'ānic verses, the speech of individuals, or some combination of the two. The differences between sources are only in presentation of the accounts, attribution of the rhetoric to different individuals or situations, or slight variations in the quotations.

Balādhurī also mentions that even after the battle of Karbalā' and after the prisoners were well on their way to Damascus, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād continued anti-Ḥusayn rhetoric from the pulpit. During one of the sermons from the pulpit of the mosque he supposedly said, 'Praised be God, the One who killed Ḥusayn and his followers...'and he was interrupted by an old blind man by the name of 'Abdullāh b. 'Afīf al-Azdī, a Shī'ī who lost his left eye during the battle of the Camel and his right eye during the battle of Ṣiffīn.[66] This scene reappears in later pro-Shī'ī sources,[67] becoming more and more embellished with Umayyad anti-Ḥusayn rhetoric, such as the recurring phrase *al-kadhdhāb ibn al-kadhdhāb*. In all accounts, 'Abdullāh b. 'Afīf became extremely agitated at 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's denunciation of Ḥusayn, and rebutted, saying that he ('Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād) and the one who made him governor (i.e., Yazīd) were both liars and sons of liars, and ridiculed their attempts to discredit Ḥusayn while attempting to maintain that they themselves were the harbingers of truth. The most

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[66] Balādhurī, 210 (n.i.)

[67] Ṭabarī also includes a brief mention of this, 358-9 (← Ḥamīd b. Muslim); Khwārazmī, 2:53 (← Abū Mikhnaf); al-Kāmil, 83 (n.i.); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 69 (n.i.); Majlisī, 45:119 (← Ibn Ṭāwūs).

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interesting thing about this example is not so much the turning of the Umayyad political rhetoric against the Umayyads themselves, for this occurrs in numerous other episodes during the Karbalā' narratives, such as we shall see when the prisoners interact with 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād and Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya. What is most interesting is that, unlike other accounts, which appear in both Sunnī and Shī'ī sources, both the earliest and even those that are much later, this episode is included by only a conspicuously select few authors. This account appears first in Balādhurī, then later only in Khwārazmī, Ibn al-Athīr, Ibn Ṭāwūs, and Majlisī, all of which (with the possible exception of Ibn al-Athīr) were Shī'ī or pro-Shī'ī biased in their depictions.

Similarly, when the prisoners were brought to Yazīd,[68] the sources portray similar confrontations, but with much more emphasis on Qur'ānic rhetoric. Even in the very earliest source, afer the prisoners are brought in to Yazīd's court and he is portrayed as having said to them, "You slaughtered yourselves like slaves for the people of 'Irāq?" 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn is depicted as having responded with the Qur'ānic verse, "There befalls no misfortune in the Earth or among yourselves except that which is written before We make it happen,"[69] implying the foresight and preparedness of the pious grandson of the

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[68] With regard to the Qur'ānic rhetorical interaction between Yazīd and the surviving Hāshimīs at the Umayyad court in Damascus, there is no omission on the part of later Shī'ī authors, as there was with 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād. It is possible that the Qur'ānic rhetoric between 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād and the Hāshimīs was a fabrication. These possibilities shall be discussed in detail in a later chapter which will analyze the literariness and historicity of all the Karbalā'-related sources in light of such observations.

[69] *Ma aṣāba min muṣībatin fī al-arḍi wa lā fī anfusikum illā fī kitābin min qabli an nabra'ahu.* (Qur'ān, 57:22) Ibn al-Zubayr, 157 (← *isnād* chart "Z", see fig. 4).

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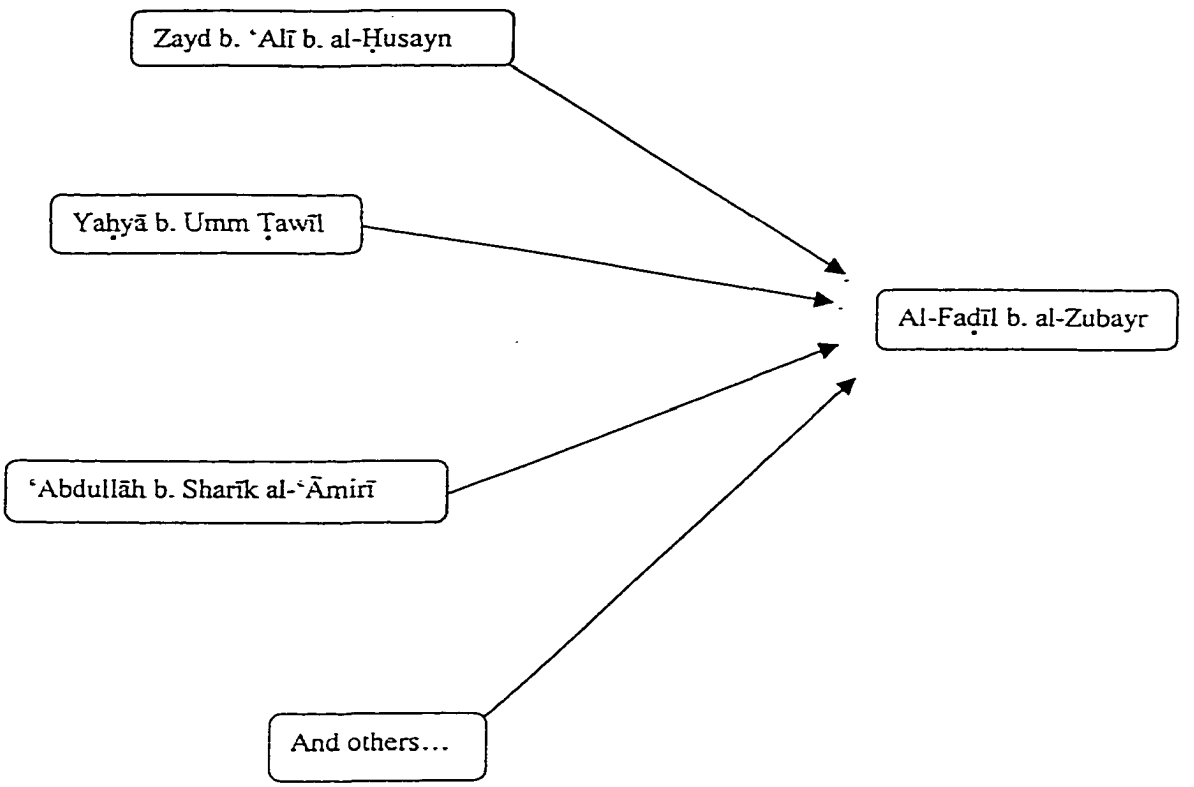

Fig. 4. Ibn al-Zubayr combined *isnād* ("Z"), see footnote 69.

Note that Zayd b. ʿAlī b. Ḥusayn (d. 122) was both an ʿAlid and a Zaydī, and ʿAbdullāh b. Sharīk al-ʿĀmirī (alive in 92) was a Kufan. Even though the third tradent is unidentifiable and the "others" are not mentioned by name, already it is abundantly clear that the identifiable sources of information for Ibn al-Zubayr are ʿAlid loyalists and Zaydīs. This becomes particularly interesting when we begin to compare the sources' characterizations of individuals involved in the events of Karbalāʾ (chapter 5), and we see that this early Zaydī source is surprisingly neutral in terms of condemnation of the Umayyads.

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Prophet of God in accepting God's will. Yazīd, in turn, is portrayed as having rebutted with another Qur'ānic verse, "And whatever misfortune befalls you is the work of your own hands,"[70] implying that the Ḥusayn's death was a direct result of his own actions, and that no one but Ḥusayn himself was responsible for his death.

Another very early source, Balādhurī, although it does not include the Qur'ānic rhetorical exchange between 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād and 'Alī b. Ḥusayn, does include the Qur'ānic rhetorical exchange between 'Alī b. Ḥusayn and Yazīd. And, in addition to the above-mentioned rhetoric, Balādhurī also mentions that when the prisoners entered Yazīd's court, Yazīd himself is reported to have said to the young 'Alī b. Ḥusayn, "My dear, indeed your father committed injustice towards me, and you see what God did to him."[71] When 'Alī responded with the Qur'ānic verse, Yazīd told his son Khālid to rebut with a Qur'ānic verse as well. In both cases the verses are the same as in Ibn al-Zubayr's earlier account. Ṭabarī's account is basically the same, with a slight but significant addition to Balādhurī's own addition.[72] In all such accounts of this event, after the exchange of Qur'ānic rhetoric, and after Yazīd's addition of a number of accusations, it concludes with his statement "and you see what God has done to him [Ḥusayn]." The

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[70] *Ma aṣābakum min muṣībatin fabimā kasabat aydīkum.* (Qur'ān, 42:30) Ibn al-Zubayr, 157 (← sequence Z).

[71] *Yā ḥabīb, inna abākaqata'a raḥamī, wa dhalamanī, faṣana'a Allāhu bihi mā ra'ayt.* Balāduhrī, 220 (← Hishām b. 'Ammār ← al-Walīd b. Muslim ← Muslim).

[72] *Ya 'Alī, abūkaalladhi qata'a raḥamī, wa jahila haqqī, wa naza'a 'annī sulṭānī, wa ṣana'a bihi Allāhu mā ra'ayt.* Ṭabarī, 461 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Ṣaq'ab b. Zuhayr ← Qāsim b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān *mawlā* Yazīd b. Mu'āwīya).

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fact that the Qur'ānic verses in each source's depiction of this account are the same speaks to an apparent consistency that is quite rare in the accounts of the events of Karbalā', and to the possible historical accuracy of this particular portion of the narratives.

Unlike the examples in this section, there are also examples of Qur'ānic rhetoric that appear to be obvious later constructions, as they appear for the first time in Khwarazmī and are conspicuously absent from all the earlier sources. One such example is a supposed conversation between 'Alī b. Ḥusayn and an old *shaykh* in the streets of Damascus. In this scenario, as the prisoners were being paraded through the streets of Damascus, an old *shaykh* allegedly approached 'Alī and said, "Praises be to God, the one who killed you, and destroyed you and gave God's servants respite from your men and allowed the commander of the faithful to destroy you."[73] To this 'Alī responded with an inquiry as to whether the *shaykh* had read the Qur'ān, and to which the *shaykh* replied in the affirmative. Then 'Alī asked if he had read a number of Qur'ānic verses, one by one. (33:33 and 42:23). And then 'Alī continued, 'we are the *qurbā* of the Prophet and we are his *ahl al-bayt*, as mentioned in those verses. Ibn Ṭāwūs includes the same basic story, but embellishes the story with two more verses, (8:41 and 17:26).[74] Majlisī mixes the

[73] Khwārazmī, 2:61 (n.i.)

[74] Ibn Ṭāwūs, 73-4 (n.i.)

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two narrations, repeating the same basic story, but including the Qur'ānic rhetoric from both Khwārazmī's and Ibn Ṭāwūs' versions and blending them into one.[75]

However, Iṣfahānī's work is the oddest in the entire range of depictions of this account, in that it repeats what most other sources relate as a rhetorical interplay between 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād and 'Alī b. Ḥusayn (God killed 'Alī... etc.), but attributes it to being between Yazīd and 'Alī rather than Ibn Ziyād and 'Alī.[76] Isfahānī then inserts his own narrative voice directly into the text, providing the explanation that no such scenario ever occurred at 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's court, and that historians prior to him have mistakenly attributed the rhetorical confrontations with Yazīd to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād instead. Although not impossible, it seems that this explanation is unsatisfactory, especially when considering numerous other aspects that betray the highly manipulated nature of Iṣfahānī's work as a whole. [77] Moreover, aside from Iṣfahānī's work, later sources all revert back to the previous type of depiction. Khwārazmī, as with previous examples of authorial manipulation in his work, added yet another statement to Yazīd's rhetorical attack of 'Alī which included *jabrī* rhetoric, saying "your father and grandfather wanted to be *amīrs* (commanders, rulers), and it was God who killed them and shed their

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[75] Majlisī, 45:129 (← Ibn Ṭāwūs)

[76] Iṣfahānī, 119-20 (← al-Madā'inī ← Mukhlid b. Ḥamza b. Bayd ← Ḥabbāb b. Mūsā ← Ḥamza b. Bayd ← Hāni' b. Thubayt al-Qāyiḍī).

[77] This shall be discussed in greater detail in a later concluding chapter, along with the previously-mentioned authorial manipulations in Khwārazmī's text.

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Pericope	IZB	ISA	BAL	DIN	YAQ	DUL	TAB	KUL	MAS	ISF	TBR	QNU	BAG	KHW	JAS	UGH	KAM	TA	SIY	TIS	IHJ	MAJ
Encounter of Ibn Ziyad and the blind 'Azdi			X											X			X	X				X
Encounter of 'Ali and the old Shaykh														X				X				X
'Ali and Yazid rhetoric with Qur'an	X		X				X			X				X								
Zaynab and Ibn Ziyad rhetoric. (w/ no Qur'an)														X			X	X				
'Ali and Ibn Ziyad rhetoric with Qur'an							X															
'Ali and Ibn Ziyad rhetoric. (w/ no Qur'an)		X	X															X				X

Fig. 5. Pericopes of Qur'ānic and *jabrī* rhetoric.

blood."[78] Nevertheless, despite the differences in wording of the rhetorical response used by Yazīd in these polemical confrontations with the survivors of the battle of Karbalā', all such accounts in one way or another make use of the new Umayyad post-Karbalā' polemic legitimizing the killing of Ḥusayn by attributing it to God rather than the Umayyads themselves.

Of Hawks and Doves

In addition to such examples of the developing Umayyad anti-Ḥusayn rhetoric appearing throughout the Karbalā' narratives, the sources also include what may be perhaps the most perfect example of post-Karbalā' Umayyad propaganda legitimizing the killing of Ḥusayn and his followers. The account in question is more than just another example of Umayyad propaganda; it can be seen as a brief summary of the various stages in the developing Umayyad propaganda up to that point in the narratives in which it appears. The account in question is a crucial reference to post-Karbalā' Umayyad rhetoric at Yazīd's court, and is found as early as the first detailed account of the events of Karabala, Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt*. It mentions that 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād sent Zuhr b. Qays al-

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[78] *Arādā Abūka wa jadduka an yakūnā amīrayn, fa alḥamdu li Allāhi alladhī qatalahumā wa safakadimā 'ahumā.* Khwārazmī, 2:63 (← Fāṭima d. al-Ḥusayn). Khwārazmī also adds a number of entirely new confrontations between Yazīd, 'Alī b. Ḥusayn and his sister Zaynab d. al-Ḥusayn, involving the status of the female prisoners as booty, and additional pulpit propaganda. These shall be discussed in detail in a later chapter analyzing the relation between the literary development of the sources and the formation of Shī'ī communal identity.

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Ju'fī to deliver the head of Ḥusayn, along with the prisoners captured after the battle, to Yazīd. Upon entering Yazīd's court, Zuhr b. Qays al-Ju'fī briefed the new caliph thus:

> Oh Commander of the faithful! Rejoice at the victory of God and His making you victorious. Ḥusayn b. 'Alī came to us along with eighteen of the people of his household and along with seventy of his followers, so we went to them, and we gave them the option of surrendering and submitting to the rule of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, or fighting, and they chose to fight rather than surrender. So we resisted them at sunrise, and we surrounded them from all sides, then we unsheathed our Yamanī swords against them and they began to retreat and scatter without any reinforcements, and they began to seek refuge from us in the hills and behind piles of rocks and in pits, like the refuge that doves seek from hawks. And God gave us victory over them! And, by God, O commander of the faithful, it was nothing but a quick meal of one who eats quickly, or an afternoon nap, and required almost no energy from the believers [implied, Umayyads] until we came to the last of them. Then the bodies were fallen flat, naked, their faces covered with dust, their throats covered with sand, the wind blowing dirt upon them, leftovers in the desert wasteland, lame foxes coming to them, eagles and vultures their visitors. [79]

Yazīd then responded, "I would have been happy with your obedience without the killing of Ḥusayn. Such is the punishment of the rebellious, disobedient separatist."[80] This passage is also found, sometimes with slight variations, in later sources. For example, Khwārazmī recounts the same account almost verbatim, but toning down the Umayyad rhetoric slightly, and removing the phrases that mention "we offered him to

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[79] Ibn Sa'd, pp 81-2 (← IS); Ṭabarī, 359 (← Hishām ← 'Abdullāh b. Yazīd b. Rawḥ b. Zinbā' al-Judhāmī ← Yazīd b. Rawḥ b. Zinbā' al-Judhāmī ← al-Ghāz b. Rabī 'a al-Jurashī ← Ḥimyar); al-Kāmil, 83 (n.i.); Majlisī, 45:129 (← al-Mufīd and Ibn Numā).

[80] Ibn Sa'd, 82 (← IS); Ṭabarī, 359 (← Hishām ← 'Abdullāh b. Yazīd b. Rawḥ b. Zinbā' al-Judhāmī ← Yazīd b. Rawh b. Zinbā' al-Judhāmī ← al-Ghāz b. Rabī'a al-Jarashi ← Ḥimyar).

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submit or fight, and they chose to fight." [81] But then, when it reappears in Ibn al-Athīr's work, the story takes its original tone as found in Ibn Sa'd, [82] as it does again when the account reappears in Majlisī's *Biḥār al-anwār*.[83]

This passage is highly significant in that, unlike previous examples where the anti-Ḥusayn Umayyad polemic involved no more than a few phrases, verses, short slogans or insults, this account presents a clear step by step justification of the murder of Ḥusayn, in addition to some heroic battlefield boasting. The statement begins with a continuation of post-Karbalā' Umayyad polemic against Husayn with the assertion that God has made the Umayyads victorious. Just as in previous examples of post-Karbalā' Umayyad rhetoric, such assertions continued to make use of the *jabrī* logic that, if God had supported Ḥusayn then he would not have failed so miserably. However, a careful analysis of this statement reveals that, while summarizing the unfolding events of the battle of Karbalā' from the Umayyad point of view, the statement also attributed the military offensive to Ḥusayn at every point in the summary. For example, Zuhr b. Qays al-Ju'fī mentioned that, "Ḥusayn came to us," indicating that the Umayyad troops did not go after Ḥusayn and implying that they were merely peacefully conducting the affairs of government when

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[81] Khwārazmī, 2:56 (← Abū Mikhnaf).

[82] al-Kāmil, 83 (n.i.).

[83] Majlisī, 45:129-130 (← al-Mufīd ← 'Abdullāh b. Yazīd al-Ḥimyarī).

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Ḥusayn came forward to challenge them to fight.[84] Then according to the speaker, the Umayyads offered Ḥusayn a peaceful solution, but Ḥusayn *chose* to fight.[85] Also, in describing the Umayyads' response to Ḥusayn's decision to fight, the speaker said that the Umayyads 'resisted them', indicating that Ḥusayn took the offensive, and that the Umayyads were merely defending themselves. The fact that the speaker indicated that the Umayyads swords were initially sheathed is also significant, in that the implication is that Ḥusayn's sword was already brandished. The imagery appears to be another indication, albeit symbolic, that the Umayyads' actions at the battle of Karbalā' were merely a defensive response to Ḥusayn's violent offensive. After some boasting of battlefield heroics in the classical Arabic style, the speaker reiterated that it was God who gave the Umayyads victory over Ḥusayn and his companions reinforcing the *jabrī* legitimation of the Umayyad position at Karbalā'. Finally, in response to this briefing, Yazīd indicated that he did not intend for Ḥusayn to be killed, but that "such is the punishment of the rebellious separatists." Clearly, at every point in this Umayyad summary of the events of the battle of Karbalā', even up to Yazīd's own response, there is a point-by-point

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[84] It is also significant that the word *warada* in Arabic when used with the preposition *'alā* often corresponds to the English verb 'to attack', though probably not in this context. Nevertheless, it is not impossible that there exists here a play on words in the Arabic original.

[85] Interestingly, offering the choice of submission before battle is not uncommon in early Islamic historical literature, in accounts of Muslim confrontations with unbelievers. Whether literary topos or historical reality, this statement may be yet another example of the Umayyad rhetorical attempts at equating Ḥusayn with unbelievers, and thereby legitimizing the Umayyads' killing of Ḥusayn.

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acquittal of the Umayyads from any guilt and responsibility in any way possible. At every point in the summary, Ḥusayn was depicted as being on the offensive, attacking, rebellious, and separatist while the Umayyads were merely defending themselves and Islam, and were for that very reason made successful by God Himself.

What is most interesting to note about this passage, however, is that there was a major polemical reversion at this point in the narratives. No longer were Ḥusayn's piety- and genealogy consciousness being attacked. In fact, Ḥusayn's personal character was not attacked at all. Instead, his actions were used as excuses for Umayyad reactions, which were in turn legitimized by God's will. This fact, as well as Yazīd's own response, are both indications of the final phase of Umayyad anti-Ḥusayn propaganda. As mentioned earlier, the resurfacing of Ḥusayn's piety- and genealogy-consciousness among the civilian masses seems to have made attacking Ḥusayn's personal character no longer an appropriate polemic. Furthermore, on a more practical political level, such a polemic attacking Ḥusayn's piety/geneology consciousness was no longer even necessary, for Ḥusayn's political threat was now neutralized. These factors seem to have caused the Umayyad propaganda during this final stage to shift its polemic such that blame for Ḥusayn's killing was shifted from the Umayyads to Ḥusayn's inappropriate political actions, rather than calling into question his personal character, which the post-Karbalā' civilian population was apparently unwilling to permit.

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As we have seen, the details of the polemic in this account fit quite accurately with the previous evidence uncovered consistently in the sources, and from a variety of points in the narratives. The fact that this account appears in the earliest source of its kind[86] and continues to be transmitted throughout the later sources consistently and with very little manipulation (aside from Khwārazmī's) is also an indication that it is not a later construction, as are numerous other examples. Furthermore, and perhaps most convincingly, the style and vocabulary of the text itself is partly an indication of its authenticity. This passage posed great difficulty in translation, for the vocabulary used was not at all typical, which may be due to its character as a *khuṭba* type speech or formal declaration, for which a special style may have been used. There is much use of archaic and classical vocabulary that seems to have been outdated even by the time Ibn Sa'd compiled his source. Even when reading Ibn Sa'd, one finds Ibn Sa'd's text both prior to and after this account relatively comprehensible, but once the quoted account begins, one finds oneself at a loss without references.[87]

All of these factors, including the propagandistic nature of the passage itself, its post-Karbalā' location within the narrative framework of the Karbalā'-related sources, its

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[86] Ibn Sa'd (← IS).

[87] This translation would have been impossible without the use of Arabic lexicons such as: Muḥammad b. Mukarram Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-'Arab al-muḥīṭ* (Beirut: Dār Lisān al-'Arab, 1980); Edward William Lane, *An Arabic English Lexicon* (Beirut: Librarie du Liban, 1968); Francis Joseph Steingass, *Student's Arabic-English Dictionary* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1966); Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Spoken Language Services, 1994).

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textual content, and its summarization of the events of Karbalā' from a purely Umayyad point of view, all make this description of the battle between 'hawks and doves' an ideal example of the shift in Umayyad rhetoric from earlier phases to the post-Karbalā' phase of Umayyad propaganda. In addition, the apparent authenticity of this passage in comparison to other portions of the Karbalā'-related a narratives make it particularly useful as historical evidence in analyzing Umayyad anti-Ḥusayn propaganda as it appears in the sources. In addition, juxtaposition of this 'official' post-Karbalā' Umayyad rhetoric with other individual statements by soldiers, and, more importantly, the negative reactions of their superiors to such 'unofficial' statements shall also serve to help better understand the apparent Umayyad stance after the battle of Karbalā'.

Here it is necessary to point out that there are two passages in particular that corroborate the idea of this development in post-Karbalā' Umayyad rhetoric against Ḥusayn and that appear throughout the range of early sources, without regard for sectarian or political biases of the authors. The importance of these examples is not that they express the post-Karbalā' rhetoric itself. In fact, it is quite the opposite. These examples show quite clearly the Umayyad government and military hierarchy's reactions to those Umayyad supporters who did not abide by the 'standard' post-Karbalā' Umayyad polemic. In these cases, Umayyad supporters who did not abide by the standard Umayyad propaganda were repremanded by their own superiors. Yet, their mistake was not that they adopted a pro-Ḥusayn stance, as opposed to that propagated by the Umayyads.

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Rather, they were repremanded for expounding an anti-Husayn stance *other than* the standard 'official' Umayyad polemic against Husayn. By this point in the narratives the Umayyads were no longer propagating a rhetoric aimed at destroying the personal character of Ḥusayn, including his aura of piety and genealogy consciousness. In other words, from the moment Husayn was killed, the Umayyad government and military leadership, from Yazīd down to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, 'Umar b. Sa'd and his lesser generals, all justified their actions by placing blame on Ḥusayn's actions, and crediting God with the Umayyads' success (i.e., pro-Umayyad *jabrī* logic), allegedly because Ḥusayn's movement was a blatant attempt to divide the Muslim community and lead it into civil war, and that the Umayyads were defending the unity of Islam by preventing Ḥusayn. Those who failed to uphold this 'official' method of denouncing Ḥusayn's actions, and either denounced Ḥusayn's credibility or his piety/genealogy consciousness, or even disregarded the Umayyad propaganda altogether, were themselves repremanded by their superiors.

A prime example of such blatant disregard for the Umayyad polemic is an oft-repeated scene in which Maḥfar b. Tha'laba al-'A'idhī is depicted as presenting the head of Ḥusayn to Yazīd at his court, saying, "I have brought for you, O commander of the faithful, the head of the most foolish of the people, and the most ignoble and lowliest of them." To this Yazīd replied, "He to whom your mother gave birth is more foolish and

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more ignoble and lowly!"[88] This is particularly noteworthy because not only does the soldier go against the established Umayyad propaganda used to legitimize the murder of Ḥusayn, but textually speaking the account often appears immediately after the 'doves and hawks' speech in the narratives, which, as we have shown, presents a line of reasoning that served as the exemplary rationale for killing Ḥusayn. Apparently this not-too-clever soldier had not noticed the shift in Umayyad propaganda against Ḥusayn from the battlefield phase to the post-Karbalā' civilian phase. Thus, his continuation of the polemical tactics of the previous battlefield phase of the Umayyad propaganda campaign against Ḥusayn by discrediting Ḥusayn's personal character and aura of piety/geneology consciousness apparently resulted in a reprimand and physical punishment at the hands of Yazīd himself. Yazīd is then portrayed as denouncing the speaker and beating him on his chest, after which he reinforced the *jabrī* argument by sarcastically reminding the speaker that he knew nothing of the (pro-*jabrī*) Qur'ānic verse, "Say, You are the possessor of power, You give power to whom you please and You take it from whom you please."[89] Though it may seem insignificant that Maḥfar's brief comment elicited a similarly brief

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[88] Ibn Sa'd, 82 (←IS), al-Kāmil, 84 (n.i.), Siyar a'lām, 315 (← Ibn Sa'd ← al-Wāqidī and ← al-Madā'inī), Tārīkh al-Islam, 5:19 (← Ibn Sa'd ← al-Wāqidī and ← al-Madā'inī). And Balādhurī, 214 (n.i.), Ṭabarī, 460 (← Hishām ← 'Abdullāh b. Yazīd b. Rawḥ b. Zinbā' al-Judhāmī ← Yazīd b. Rawḥ b. Zinbā' al-Judhāmī ← al-Ghāz b. Rabī 'a al-Jurashī ← Ḥimyar), and Majlisī, 45:131 (← al-Mufīd ← 'Abdullāh b. Rabī'a al-Ḥimyarī), all recount a similar scenario, but replacing the descriptor *aḥmaq* with *afjar* and *al'am*, meaning debauchee, shameless.

[89] *Allāhumma mālika al-mulki tu'ti al-mulka man tashā' wa tanzi'u al-mulka min man tashā'* (Qur'ān, 3:26). Same *isnād*s as previous note.

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retort, and an insult to his mother at that, the mentioning of the Qur'ānic verse by Yazīd only emphasized the notion that the Umayyads wanted not to discredit Ḥusayn in the post-Karbalā' phase by childish name-calling, but by Qur'ānic rhetoric showing that Ḥusayn was responsible for the outcome of the battle, and, more significantly, that God chose his fate. Yazīd's use of Qur'ānic verses to substantiate his rhetoric in this way only seems to have legitimized it even more by showing that Ḥusayn's death was decreed by God Himself. This example affirms the fact that the Umayyad polemic changed after Karbalā' to a *jabrī* one that emphasized fate suffered as the result of Ḥusayn's own actions, and God's support of the victor, allowing the Umayyads to wash their hands clean of accusations that Ḥusayn was killed unjustly at the hands of the Umayyads.

Another such example is when, after the battle of Karbalā', the decapitator of Ḥusayn[90] (presumably carrying Ḥusayn's head at the time) approached 'Umar b. Sa'd, the commander in chief of Umayyad troops at Karbalā', and recited in as loud and boastful a voice as he could muster:

> fill my saddle packs with silver and gold
> I have killed the protected angel
> I have killed the one who had the best mother and father
> and the best of people in terms of his ancestry
> and the best of them among the nation in terms of his position of honor.[91]

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[90] In some sources Khawlī, but most identify him as Sinān. See chapter 4, the economy of militarization: *mawālī* and *ghulāms*.

[91] Balādhurī indicates that it was Sinān, 205 (n.i.). Also, it is a scenario that is repeated in Ṭabarī, who indicates that it was Sinān b. Anas, Ṭabarī, 454 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Sulaymān b. Abī Rāshid ← Ḥamīd b. Muslim); Mas'ūdī indicates that it was an unnamed person of the Madhḥij tribe, 61 (n.i.); Iṣfahānī indicates that Sinān b. Anas cut

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In response to this, 'Umar b. Sa'd appeared in front of the entrance to his tent, and said, "I bear witness that you are crazy, and have not spoken one word of truth!"[92] Then, after ordering the troops to bring him inside, he beat the arrogant poet with a stick and then said, "O madman! You dare speak such words?! By God, if 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād heard your words he would have cut off your head!" [93]

Unlike the previous example, where the speaker disregarded the Umayyad public policy altogether and resorted to calling Husayn insulting names, in this example, the decapitator not only ignored the Umayyad polemic, but actually went against it. Not only did he disregard the Umayyad attempts to divest Ḥusayn of his aura of piety/genealogy consciousness, but in boasting of his triumph in the poem, he actually recalled Ḥusayn's closeness to the Prophet and revived the aura of piety and genealogy consciousness that the people attributed to him. In fact, it is precisely that aura of closeness to the Prophet that the soldier hoped to play on in the poem, for he sought rewards even greater than

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the head, but Shimr and Khawlī delivered it, Iṣfahānī, 119 (← al-Madā'inī ← Mukhlid b. Ḥamza b. Bayḍ ← Habbāb b. Mūsā ← Hamza b. Bayd ← Hāni' b. Thubayt al-Qāyidī); Khwārazmī, 2:61 (← Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Aḥmad al-Karbāsī ← Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf b. Muḥammad al-Bilālī ← Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Zayd al-Ḥasanī al-Ḥusaynī ← al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad al-Fārisī ← Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Īsā ← Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Mansūr al-Murādī ← Aḥmad b. 'Īsā b. Zayd b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn ← Ibn Khālid ← Zayd ← Abū Zayd ('Alī b. Ḥusayn); Usd al-ghāba mentions that it was Sinān, 21-2 (n.i.); and al-Kāmil indicates that it was Sinān, 79 (n.i.).

[92] Ibid., *Ashhadu annaka majnūn ma ṣaḥaḥta qatt.*

[93] Ibid., *Yā aḥmaq a tatakallamu bi hādhā? Wallāhi law sami'aka Ibn Ziyād, laḍaraba'unuqaka!*

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usual, because he had killed Ḥusayn, a person much closer to the Prophet than usual.[94] Both of these examples serve to show, by virtue of the Umayyads' reactions to heedless subordinates, that the final stage of the developing Umayyad anti-Ḥusayn propaganda was one where Ḥusayn's characteristic piety and geneology consciousness were to be respected, while *jabrī* logic was to be used to shift responsibility for the bloodshed at Karbalā' to Ḥusayn himself, and Umayyad legitimacy achieved through acquiescence to the will of God.

Conclusion

In light of all these examples, it seems clear not only that the Umayyads propagated clearly anti-Ḥusayn rhetoric, but also that the Umayyad anti-Ḥusayn propaganda developed incrementally, and in response to the increasing political tensions at the time. Early examples showed that long before the events of the battle of Karbalā' even began to unfold, certain members of the Umayyad clan communicated directly to Ḥusayn, attempting to impress upon him the importance of unity and warning him of separatism. After Mu'āwiya's death, as Ḥusayn began to gather support and receive oaths of allegiance from people in the Ḥijāz and particularly in the 'Irāq, the Umayyad establishment began to propagate the same calls for unity and warnings of separatism, but

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[94] It is also an indication of what shall be discussed in the next chapter of this study, the economy of confrontation.

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on a new level of mass-dissemination. This was done primarily by the extremely efficient, coordinated, and organized use of the pulpits of congregational mosques throughout the Umayyad domain in order to neutralize the aura of piety/genealogy consciousness that surrounded Ḥusayn and eliminate any possiblity of his candidacy for leadership. Then, as Ḥusayn travelled through the Arabian desert from Mecca to Kūfa, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, the Umayyad governor at Kūfa, continued and intensified anti-Ḥusayn rhetoric aimed at neutralizing Ḥusayn's aura of piety/genealogy consciousness. But, as Ḥusayn drew closer and tensions in Kūfa increased, the Umayyads also began to make incresing use of varying forms of 'propaganda of the deed' in order to prevent insurrection and discourage Kūfan support of Husayn. After intercepting Ḥusayn before he could reach the Kūfans, and beseiging him and his followers at Karbalā', the Umayyad propaganda during the seige and during the battle itself then shifted from merely neutralizing Ḥusayn's aura of piety consciousness among the Kūfan populace, to aiming at destroying it altogether in the minds of the soldiers, and even using Ḥusayn's claims to genealogical succession against him. Finally, after the battle of Karbalā', the tactics of the Umayyad propaganda machine shifted once again, legitimizing the killing of Ḥusayn by attributing the Umayyad victory at the battle to the will of God, and by using *jabrī* logic and Qur'ānic verses as a rhetorical device in support of their claim. The 'hawks and doves' speech at Yazīd's court in Damascus is the ideal example of the 'official' post-Karbalā' Umayyad polemic against Ḥusayn in this final phase of the Umayyad

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propaganda campaign. In addition, the reactions of high ranking members of the Umayyad establishment to isolated instances of soldiers disregarding this polemic further corroborate evidence from previous examples of the final stage of development of the Umayyad propaganda campaign which aimed at first to neutralize Ḥusayn's aura of piety/geneology consciousness, then to destroy it altogether, and finally to legitimize the results of the battle of Karbalā'. The vast array of examples of this development in the primary Karbalā'-related sources is evidence of the cleverly-designed and well-orchestrated nature of the Umayyad polemic and propaganda prior to, during, and after the battle of Karbalā'. Moreover, although it is clear that later 'Abbāsid, Būyid, and Shī'ī sources embellished reports in order to discredit the Umayyads, previously mentioned factors such as the absence, in later pro-Ḥusayn sources, of portions of accounts legitimizing the Umayyads at Karbalā' proves that the above conclusions are based on evidence prior to Shī'ī manipulation, and independent of later efforts to discredit the Umayyads.

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CHAPTER 4

THE ECONOMY OF CONFRONTATION:

UMAYYAD ECONOMIC TACTICS AGAINST ḤUSAYN

Among the many tactics that sources portray as having been used by the Umayyads and their supporters to discourage a largely piety and genealogy conscious population from supporting Ḥusayn and his movement, the political propaganda against Ḥusayn and the *jabrī* and Qur'ānic rhetoric used to legitimize his fate functioned mainly on the level of polemical and ideological discourse. However, a number of other physically tangible tactics, such as threatening with death those who refused to support the Umayyads against Ḥusayn, and bribery with wealth, land, and positions of power, are also depicted continually and consistently in the sources. The vast majority of the literary depictions of such tactics, particularly those of threats to the lives of those who failed to support the Umayyad cause, are found at points in the narratives that are prior to the actual battle of Karbalā'. A number of the examples of these bribes and threats are portrayed as having occured simultaneously with the Umayyad rhetoric against Ḥusayn, particularly when it took the form of a public announcement, as was often the case in previous examples of pulpit propaganda and 'propaganda of the deed'. Also, side by

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side with such examples are other examples that appear at points in the narratives but prior to the actual fighting on the day of 'Āshūrā', depicting the presence of Umayyad spies throughout the provinces, and the people's fear of being identified to the authorities by these informants. With this expansive network of informants, the Umayyads are shown as having made full use of all the resources of their administration to execute a well-orchestrated offensive aimed at countering Ḥusayn's attempt at seizing the caliphate. In addition, there are examples in the sources of accounts during the battle of Karbalā' and just after it, depicting actions of a number of the soldiers that portray economic opportunity, rather than a firm belief in the anti-Ḥusayn polemic propagated by the Umayyads, as being the driving force behind their involvement in the military confrontation against Ḥusayn. In general, the Umayyad establishment is depicted as having made very clever use of not only a well-reasoned polemic to overcome the aura of piety/genealogy-consciousness that surrounded Ḥusayn, but also, in cases when rhetoric and propaganda alone may not have been enough, the Umayyads are portrayed as having also made use of economic incentives to bribe people with wealth and positions of power, and even threatening with death those who refused to cooperate.[1]

[1] As has been shown in the previous chapter, certain limited examples of propaganda of the deed appeared in the early sources, particularly in the public executions of Ḥusayn's messengers to Kūfa as a deterrent to further rebellion. This section will focus instead on those portrayals of propaganda of the deed that involve economic or other more tangible factors, as opposed to the *jabrī* rhetoric of the previous chapter.

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The Economy of Propaganda

Fearing that the standard Umayyad anti-Ḥusayn polemic was not enough to turn people against Ḥusayn, the Umayyads are often depicted as having used threats and bribes to isolate Ḥusayn from any mass support among the populace. These threats were sometimes announced in conjunction with the anti-Ḥusayn rhetoric often propagated via the pulpits at congregational mosques, where they could be disseminated to the widest possible audience. In most of these scenarios appearing in the narratives, bribery and the threats directed towards those who refused to accept often occurred simultaneously. The references to such depictions can be divided into a number of basic categories within the narrative time frame. The first references are to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's threats from the *minbar* of Baṣra, after receiving orders from Yazīd to take over the governorship of Kūfa, and after killing Ḥusayn's messenger to Basra. After a short explanation for his departure and after appointing his brother as his replacement during his absence, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād is reported to have threatened any who became unruly with death and with the deaths of those close to them, saying, "And if I am informed of any man from among you who opposes or agitates, I will kill him [Ṭabarī adds, 'and his assistants'] and his close ones and I will take the closest in place of the farthest, and the innocent in place of the guilty. So consider yourselves warned!"[2] Ṭabarī also adds, "So let there not be among

[2] *la'in balaghanī 'an rajulin minkum khālafa aw arjafa la'aqtulannahu wa walīyahu, wa la ākhudhanna al-adnā bi al-aqsā, wa al-barī' bi al-saqīm hattā tastaqīmū, wa qad a'thara man andhar.* Dīnawarī, 232 (n.i.).

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you any opposer or separatist. I am the son of Ziyād. I resemble him most from among all who tread the earth and I am deficient in resemblance neither of uncle nor of cousin."[3] Khwārazmī includes a much more detailed and embellished version in his account.[4]

This passage marks the first indications of harsh tactics on the part of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, with clear threats of collective, rather than individual, punishment for the unruly. Ibn Ziyād's iron-fisted nature is not only apparent from this passage, but sources prior to Dīnawarī also characterize Ibn Ziyād as such, although not necessarily in this particular context within the Karbalā' narrative.[5] At any case, this passage is clearly a depiction of Ibn Ziyād's attempt to enforce his authority, partly by making use of blatant threats of collective punishment in addition to making use of a vocabulary base including such words as 'separatist', as seen in previous chapters.

Another instance where such threats are portrayed in the Karbalā' narratives is when 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād first arrived at Kūfa. Immediately after his arrival, he is

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[3] *wa lā yakūnu fīkum mukhālif wa lā mushāq. Anā Ibn Ziyād, ashbahtuhu min bayna man waṭi'a al-haṣā, wa lam yantazi'nī shibhu khāl wa lā ibnu 'ammin.* Ṭabarī, 358 (← Hishām ← 'Awāna). This appears to be not only a reference to Mu'āwiya (uncle) and Yazīd (cousin), but also a retort to those who questioned his geneology, for his father, Ziyād b. Abīhi (Ziyād, son of his father) was so named because he was accused of being a bastard, later 'adopted' by Mu'āwiya as a brother. This particular statement appears to be a reference to the Arabic proverb, 'the legitimate son resembles either maternal or paternal uncle,' a rhyme in the original Arabic (*al-walad al-ḥalāl yashbahu al-'amm aw al-khāl*).

[4] Khwārazmī, 199 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham).

[5] Such depictions of individuals will be the prime focus of the following chapter.

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portrayed in the sources as having ascended the pulpit, called the people of Kūfa to the congregational mosque and exclaimed,

> Oh people of Kūfa! Indeed the commander of the faithful has given me governorship of your garrison town, and *distribution of the treasury* [emphasis mine]. And ordered me to exact justice for the oppressed, and to express beneficence to the obedient among you who listen, and harshness to the disobedient and those arousing suspicion, and I will carry out his orders to the letter. And I am your provider like a caring father, and your opponent like potent, steeped poison, so let there be no collective action [literally, let no one among you remain except to himself].[6]

This passage is significant in that it not only marks 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's first public announcement at Kūfa, but also indicates the next step in the depictions of the incremental development of his tactics of control. Here, in addition to making use of direct threats, as in the previous example, we see the beginnings of another major factor in the success of the Umayyad propaganda campaign against Ḥusayn: the economic factor. According to this account, while announcing his new assignment at Kūfa and establishing his authority, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād made particular note of being responsible for the treasury and distributing the wealth therein. At first glance, this may seem

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[6] *Yā ahla al-Kūfa, inna Amīr al-Mu'minīn qad wallānī miṣrakum, wa qassama fay'akum fīkum, wa ămaranī bi anṣāf al-maẓlūm, wa al-iḥsān ilā samī'ikum, wa muṭī'ikum, wa al-shidda 'alā 'āṣikum wa murībikum, wa anā muntahī fī dhālikailā amrihi, wa anā lamuṭī'ukum ka al-wālid al-shafīq, wa lamukhālifukum ka al-sammi al-naqi', fa lā yabqiyanna aḥadun minkum illā 'alā nafsihi.* Dīnawarī, 232-33 (n.i.). Iṣfahānī adds, *al-ṣidq yanbi'u 'anka lā al-wa'īd.* Iṣfahānī, 100 (← 'Amr ← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Ma'allī b. Kulayb ← Abū al-Wadāk). Khwārazmī adds, *wa sayfī wa sawṭī 'alā man taraka amrī.* Khwārazmī, 200 (Aḥmad b. A'tham). In addition to this, Khwārazmī adds a new account when 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, after getting Hāni''s people to leave, goes to *masjid* and calls for obedience, but before Muslim b. 'Aqīl's rebellion. [Khwārazmī, 206(← Aḥmad b. A'tham)].

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insignificant, but closer consideration of the historical context of the economic base of Kūfa at the time and its relation to later historical events reveals that such passages are actually quite significant. This is particularly the case in regards to the Karbalā'-related narratives. Not only do such passages reappear repeatedly in the sources, but they also clarify the importance of what shall be termed here the 'economy of military confrontation.' Although every population center requires mercantile activity by necessity, unlike Damascus or Mecca in the first century of Islam and Baghdad in the second, the Kūfa of Ḥusayn and 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's time was not primarily a mercantile center.[7] Though it did later absorb the population of al-Ḥīra, Kūfa was originally founded as a garrison town during the earliest phase of Islamic expansion in the 'Irāq, and only later did it cease to operate as such. It is not unreasonable to conclude from historical evidence in the sources that, as the confrontation between Ḥusayn and Umayyad forces was brewing, much of Kūfa's population was dependent on military pensions paid by the central government. It is for precisely this reason that statements made by 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād to the effect that the treasury was now under his control, and that he would express generosity towards those who support him (and, by extension,

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[7] See Hichem Djait, *Kūfa: Naissance de la Ville* Islamique (Paris: G.P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1986), 65-9; and Hishām Jait (sic.), *al-Kūfa*, (Kuwait: Mu'assissat al-Kuwait li al-Taqaddum al-'Ilmī, 1986), 6-9; Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, 226-30; Kāẓim Janābī, *Takhtīt madīnat al-Kūfa 'an al-maṣādir al-tārīkhīya wa al-atharīya khāṣṣatan fī al-'aṣr al-Umawī* (Baghdad: Maṭābi' Dār al-Jumhūrīya, 1967), 19-27; Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Zubaydī, *al-Ḥayāt al-ijtimā'īya wa al- iqtiṣādīya fī al-Kūfa* (Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-'Ālīya, 1970), 21-26.

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Yazīd) are portrayed as having carried such weight over the Kūfan populace. In addition, because the Kūfans requested Ḥusayn's leadership on the basis that the Umayyads were unjust and inappropriate leaders, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's statements indicating that he had been sent to 'exact justice for the oppressed' are depicted as clearly undermining Ḥusayn's claims to leadership. 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's delivery of justice would have eliminated any need for Ḥusayn to assume leadership, because the duty Ḥusayn was requested to fulfill would have already been accomplished. And, just in case all of these reasons were not enough to elicit loyalty from the Kūfans, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's mentioning that he was as a 'steeped poison' to his enemies also reinforced his threatening attitude towards dissenters.

Intensification of Economic Propaganda at Kūfa

Not long after making that announcement, the worsening situation in Kūfa as well as the capture and imprisonment of Hāni' b. 'Urwa eventually resulted in a rebellion led by Ḥusayn's first messenger to Kūfa, Muslim b. 'Aqīl. By all accounts, an overwhelming majority of Kūfans had surrounded the castle in which 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād and a small number of Umayyad loyalists were trapped. Although some accounts vary, most of the early sources indicate that nearly 4,000 Kūfan supporters of Ḥusayn led by Muslim b. 'Aqīl, surrounded the castle, in which were besieged 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, his personal guards, some of the Kūfan *ashrāf* notables, and a number of Umayyad loyalists that

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altogether numbered no more than thirty men.[8] During this particularly tense moment in the narrative, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād is said to have ordered the *ashrāf* notables of the tribes of Kūfa who were with him in the castle to ascend to the top of the castle and use a combination of deception, bribery, and threats to diffuse the angry mob. Here, as with earlier examples in the previous chapter, the *ashrāf* notables are depicted as having urged unity, by saying, "Oh people of Kūfa, fear God and do not hurry to civil war! Don't split apart the unity of this community! You don't want the cavalry of Syria upon you, for you have tasted and tried their sharpness!"[9] Thus, because of the heightened tensions placing their own lives on the line, in addition to mere calls for unity, they are portrayed as having included threats of the approaching Syrian cavalry, in order to frighten the sieging mob. In describing this same scenario, Ṭabarī includes several accounts, one of which indicates

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[8] Later sources exaggerate both of these figures, depending on their bias. Ibn Ḥajar al-'Āsqalānī (n.i.), for example, indicates that Muslim's rebellion consisted of 40,000 men who surrounded the castle. Similarly, some sources indicate that 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād had as many as one hundred Umayyad loyalists in the castle. In either case, it is clear that an overwhelming majority, even if not much more than 4,000 men, surrounded and besieged between thirty and one hundred Umayyad loyalists. Were it not for 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's clever deception, this would have marked an elimination of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād and the Umayyads from Kūfa, and the chain of events that eventually led to the battle of Karbalā' never would have taken place. In fact, if Muslim's revolt was successful, that would have paved the way for Husayn's leadership in Kūfa, if not all of 'Irāq, and eventually, a large-scale confrontation between 'Irāqī supporters of Ḥusayn and Syrian supporters of Yazīd. Then, this phase in Islamic history would not have been only an ideological struggle as was the battle of Karbalā', but perhaps a large-scale bloody military confrontation between armies of thousands, with massive casualties.

[9] *Yā ahla al-Kūfa! Ittaqū Allāha wa lā tasta'jilū al-fitna. Wa lā tashaqqū 'aṣā hādhihi al-umma, wa lā turīdū 'alā anfusikum khuyūl al-Shām, fa qad dhuqtumūhum, wa jarrabtum shawkatahum.* Dīnawarī, 239 (n.i.).

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that, when the people gathered around the castle and began throwing stones and cursing 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, he ordered Kathīr b. Shuhāb (leader of the Madhḥij tribe) to "make people desert Muslim b. 'Aqīl, and instill fear in them of war, and warn them of punishment of the ruler,"[10] and he mentions the leaders of the other tribes also being ordered similar calls for unity by 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād.[11] In Ṭabarī's second account of this scenario, it indicates that Ibn Ziyād gathered together the *ashrāf* notables and told them to "tempt the obedient with increased [wealth] and status, instill fear in the opposition by dispossession [of pay] and punishment, and inform them that the armies of Syria have been dispatched to deal with them."[12] And in a third account, Ṭabarī includes a much lengthier account, which also includes similar themes of unity, but includes much more blatant threats.

> Oh people, go back to your families. Do not hurry to commit evil, and do not expose yourselves to death, for here are the armies of Yazīd, the commander of the faithful, approaching, and he has sworn an oath to God, that if you continue your plans to do battle with him and do not disperse, this very night to dispossess your families from pensions, and to send a detachment of the Syrian troops from the frontier to fight you, and they are easy things to do, and to take the innocent for the guilty, and the witness

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[10] *yukhadhdhil al-nās 'an Ibn 'Aqīl wa yukhawwifuhum al-ḥarb, wa yuhadhdhiurhum 'uqūba al-sulṭān.* Ṭabarī, 369 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Yūnus b. Abī Isḥāq ← 'Abbās al-Jadalī); Iṣfahānī, 103 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Yūsuf b. Yazīd ← 'Abdullāh b. Ḥāzim al-Bakrī).

[11] Ibid., 369.

[12] *Mannū ahl al-ṭā'ati al-ziyāda wa al-karāma, wa khawwifū ahl al-ma'ṣiya al-ḥirmāna wa al-'uqūba, wa-a'limūhum fuṣūla al-junūdi min al-Shāmi ilayhim.* Ṭabarī, 370 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Abū Janāb al-Kalbī).

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> for the absentee, until there remains no disobedient one among you who has not tasted it and heeded what its hands will have done. [13]

In this case, threats of cutting off all salaries are made (by dispossession of pensions), and then a more intense threat of armed conflict with the Umayyad military.[14] More significantly, however, although there are slight variations of wording and other minor discrepancies, all these early depictions agree on certain specific aspects of the incident. All agree that 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād escalated the level of his violent threats and allusions to economic power by expressing them as clear public threats to both the economic well being of the Kūfans and to their physical persons. The depictions portray 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād as able to succeed in dividing Ḥusayn and Muslim b. 'Aqīl from their supporters and then establishing Umayyad authority over Kūfa, by playing on the Kūfans' two main fears: economic sanctions and military threats. Rather than seeing that 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's threats of economic sanctions and his threats of dispatching the Syrian army to

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[13] *Ayyuha al-nās: ilhaqu bi ahālīkum, wa lā tu'ajjilū al-sharra, wa lā tu'arridhū anfusakum li al-qatl, fa inna hādhihi junūdu Yazīd amīr al-mu'minīn qad aqbalat, wa qad a'ṭā Allāha al-amīru 'aḥdan: la'in atmamtum 'alā ḥarbihi wa lam tanṣarifū min 'ashīyyatikum, an yuḥrima dhurrīyyatikum al-'aṭa', wa yufarriqa min maqātilatikum fī al-maghāzi ahla al-Shām 'alā ghayri ṭam', wa an ya'khudh al-barī' bi al-saqīm, wa al-shāhid bi al-ghā'ib, ḥattā la yabqā lahu fīkum baqīya min ahl al-ma'ṣiya illā adhāqahā wa balā mā jarrat aydīha.* Ṭabarī, 370-371 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Sulaymān b. Abī Rāshid ← 'Abdullāh b. Khāzim al-Kuthayrī ← *min al-Azd* ← *min B. Kuthayr*).

[14] Iṣfahānī includes a version that is clearly a brief summary of the first two of Ṭabarī's versions and excluding the third. This is obvious not only from literal quotation of certain portions, but also from thematic consistencies (for example, mentioning the punishment of the ruler, war, etc., but a lack of mention of pensions and salaries.) and from the *isnāds*. Iṣfahānī, 103 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Sulaymān b. Abī Rāshid ← 'Abdullāh b. Ḥāzim al-Bakrī).

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Kūfa were a political bluff, and that neither threat could have been possible if he were attacked and killed by the mob, the depictions portray the Kūfan's fear of both economic and military retaliation as eventually leading them to betray Muslim b. ʿAqīl and to disperse.

Furthermore, there are also numerous instances when threats of violence and economic manipulation are coupled with the developing propaganda campaign against Ḥusayn. For instance, after making certain that the rebellion of Muslim b. ʿAqīl was quelled, sources portray ʿUbaydullāh b. Ziyād as having climbed the pulpit once again to announce the beginning of a witch-hunt for Muslim, saying,

> Indeed, Ibn ʿAqīl, the impudent fool, has achieved what you see as a result of his opposition and separatism. God's protection is not guaranteed for any man in whose house we find him [Muslim b. ʿAqīl] and whoever delivers him [to me] then he has the blood money [as a reward]. Fear God, O servants of God, and stick to your obedience and oath of allegiance, and don't give me any excuse against you![15]

While the Umayyad propaganda campaign against Ḥusayn at this point in the narratives was attempting to break down people's awareness of Ḥusayn's piety and genealogy consciousness and cutting Ḥusayn off from any potential base of support, ʿUbaydullāh b. Ziyād's use of threats of physical violence and economic persuasion are also portrayed as

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[15] *Fa inna Ibn ʿAqīl al-safīy al-jāhil qad aṭā mā qad raʾaytum min al-khilāfi wa al-shiqāq, fa bariʾat dhimmat Allāhi min rajulin wajadnāhu fī dārihi. Fa man jāʾa bihi fa lahu diyatuhu. Ittaqū Allāha ʿibād Allāhi, wa alzimū ṭāʿatakum wa bayʿatakum, wa lā tajʿalū ʿalā anfusikum sabīlā.* Ṭabarī, 372 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Mujālid b. Saʿīd). Also in Khwārazmī, 208 (← Aḥmad b. Aʿtham), but adding, *wa al-manzila al-rāfiʿa min amīr al-muʾminīn, wa lahu kulla yawmin ḥajja maqdīya.* Also an abbreviated version in al-Kāmil, 32 (n.i.); also in Majlisī, 44:351 (← al-Mufīd).

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becoming more intense. First he discredited Muslim b. 'Aqīl as an 'impudent fool.' In a sense, as representative of Ḥusayn to Kūfa, the statement could have been seen as applying to Ḥusayn by extension. Furthermore, because of Muslim's status as Ḥusayn's representative, anyone supporting Muslim would have been by extension supporting Ḥusayn as well. Here, in addition to the rhetoric stressing obedience and allegiance, in these depictions there is a distinct increase in the level of threats of violence, as well as more explicit indications of economic rewards for non-cooperation with Ḥusayn and his representatives. By threatening violence against anyone found harboring Muslim b. 'Aqīl, and by offering a financial reward for his head, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād is shown as having accomplished by way of violent threats and economic incentives exactly what the Umayyad propaganda campaign at this phase in the narratives accomplished by rhetoric: alienation of Ḥusayn from any potential base of support in Kūfa.

An even more explicit example of such use of threats of violence and economic incentives appears at a tense point in the narratives just prior to the confrontation with Ḥusayn, is a depiction of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's announcement from the pulpit of the congregational mosque of Kūfa that the salaries of all those who bore arms in support of the Umayyads against Ḥusayn would be multiplied a hundred fold. Indeed, a careful re-examination of the evidence in the sources indicates that there are depictions that trace this type of Umayyad economic activity in the Karbalā' narratives back to Yazīd himself.

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In the narratives that describe the accession of Yazīd to the caliphate,[16] all depict how, immediately upon entering the Umayyad mosque of Damascus after his father's burial, he ordered monetary payment for those who gave him oath of allegiance, and increased the positions of those who praised him and otherwise attempted to curry favor with the new caliph.[17] However, as it later became evident that the majority of Muslims in cities other than Damascus were not as willing to accept Yazīd as the new caliph so easily, Yazīd is shown as having attempted to 'buy' their allegiance as well. There are also references to a letter from Yazīd to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād indicating that, in addition to propagating anti-Ḥusayn rhetoric and threatening the people, he should announce that those who cooperate with the Umayyad establishment would have their government allowances multiplied one hundred fold.[18]

In response to Yazīd's letter, and just prior to the confrontation with Ḥusayn, some accounts indicate that 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād called the citizens to gather in the congregational mosque of Kūfa, and, after praising Mu'āwiya from the pulpit, he stated,

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[16] Not all narratives go so far back in recounting the events leading up to the battle of Karbalā'. Some concern themselves only with the battle itself, while others take great pains to provide the reader with a significant amount of background information that clarifies the motivations of the various parties that later became involved in the battle of Karbalā' itself.

[17] Mas'ūdī, 65 (n.i.); Khwārazmī, 179 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); Majlisī, 44:270 (← 'Abdullāh b. al-Faḍl al-Hāshimī).

[18] Balādhurī, 178 (n.i.) and 220 (← al-'Amri ← al-Haytham b. 'Adī *y* ← Mujālid b. Sa'īd.); Majlisī, 44:385 (← Muḥammad b. Abī Ṭālib).

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> Yazīd is his son. He has increased your pensions a hundred times over, so let no man from among the authorities, the tribal leaders, the merchants, or residents remain who has not gone forth to the front with me to do battle [against Ḥusayn]. And any man that we find after today opposing the military draft, let him consider himself warned![19]

As with the simultaneously developing Umayyad polemic against Ḥusayn, which at this point in the narratives shifted from merely neutralizing his piety and genealogy consciousness to destroying it altogether, a similar shift in intensity also seems apparent in the depictions of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's use of violent threats and economic incentives as weapons. Unlike the previous example, when a limited reward was specified for the head of Muslim b. 'Aqīl, this account attempts to indicate that, by this point in the Karbalā' narrative, the coffers of the treasury were opened wide to finance a now inevitable military campaign against Ḥusayn. In addition, whereas in the previous example 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād threatened with death any individual who harbored Muslim b. 'Aqīl (thereby alienating Ḥusayn from potential supporters), by this point in the narratives 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's threats were aimed at directing the same battle-aged men who only weeks earlier wrote to Ḥusayn offering him their oaths of allegiance and their swords to now take up their arms *against* Ḥusayn. Parallel to the depictions indicating that the increasing tensions on the eve of Ḥusayn's approach towards Kūfa incited a shift in the developing Umayyad polemic against Ḥusayn, the sources also

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[19] *Inna Yazīda... qad zādakum mi'atan mi'atun fī a'tīyātikum fa lā yabqīyanna rajulun min al 'urafā'i wa al-manākibi wa al-tujjāri wa al-sukkāni illā kharaja fa 'askara ma'ī. Fa ayyumā rajulun wajadnāhu ba'da yawminā hādhā mutakhallifan 'an al-'askari, bari'at minhu al-dhimma.* Balādhurī, 178 (n.i.).

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depict 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's developing tactics of violent threats and economic manipulation as having reached an unprecedented level of intensity.[20]

Unlike the piety/genealogy consciousness and incrementally developing *jabrī* and Qur'anic rhetoric examined in previous chapters, the depictions of the Kūfan economic activity discussed above appear to be fabrications designed to demonize Yazīd and/or 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād as irreligious tyrants, and the Kūfans as disloyal 'sellouts' lacking any moral principles. Careful examination of the fact that the majority of depictions explicitly indicating economic activity appear for the first time in the work of Dīnawarī, then in the works of Mas'ūdī, Khwārazmī, and Majlisī, in addition to the fact that these accounts lack any chains of *isnād* linking them to the alleged events that occurred, lead us to the above conclusion. Whereas previous accounts of Ḥusayn's piety/genealogy consciousness and the Umayyads' propaganda and *jabrī* rhetoric against him, despite being manipulated by later authors/compilers, actually have historical bases upon which they can be founded, these accounts of Umayyad economic activity and bribery prior to the battle of Karbalā' appear to lack such historical bases altogether.

However, one striking example of depictions of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād using coercive economic measures that does seem to have some *isnād* support is that of the accounts of 'Umar b. Sa'd's assignment to the post of general of the Umayyad army at

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[20] By this point in the narratives, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's economy of warfare included much more intense financing and the addition of potential for new and higher status and position in the Umayyad administration.

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Karbalā'. In these accounts, mention is made of not only threats to 'Umar b. Sa'd's life, but also of offers of economic incentives. As with previous depictions of Umayyad economic tactics, which involved threats of economic sanctions or even increasing pensions, these accounts mention that 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād offered to 'Umar b. Sa'd the governorship of the districts of Ray, Daylam, and Dastabay as a reward for leading the troops against Ḥusayn.[21] Also, Ṭabarī includes two accounts, one of which simply indicates that 'Umar b. Sa'd was awarded the city of Ray.[22] Another, however, indicates that 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād awarded Ray to 'Umar b. Sa'd prior to the battle of Karbalā', as a reward for recapturing Dastabay back from the Daylamites, but, as 'Umar b. Sa'd's troops were being mobilized to advance towards Dastabay, Ḥusayn's camp was captured and besieged at Karbalā' and the troops were diverted towards Ḥusayn instead.[23] Iṣfahānī repeats, albeit more briefly, only the latter account of Ṭabarī with the same *isnād*.[24]

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[21] Balādhurī, 176 (n.i.). The implication in these accounts is that the assignment of the *iqṭā'* land grant was not only for 'Umar b. Sa'd as general, but also those troops which were under his immediate command as well.

[22] Ṭabarī, 389 (← 'Ammār al-Duhnī ← Abū Ja'far, and by another *isnād*, ← Zakariyā b. Yaḥyā al-Darīr ← Aḥmad b. Janāb al-Massīsī. ← Khālid b. Yazīd b. 'Abdullāh al-Qaṣrī ← Ammār al-Duhnī ← Abū Ja'far).

[23] Ṭabarī, 409 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jundub ← 'Uqba b. Sim'ān); Iṣfahānī, 112 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jundub ← 'Uqba b. Sim'ān al-Kalbī). As we shall see in the next chapter on individual characterizations, this may have been an attempt by some narrators to remove some blame from 'Umar b. Sa'd by making his mobilization of troops seem for another, more legitimate purpose.

[24] Iṣfahānī, 112 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jundub ← 'Uqba b. Sim'ān al-Kalbī).

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Khwārazmī includes a much longer version of the same account, and adding that 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād offered the governorship of any city under Umayyad control as a reward for any man who was willing to take charge of the army against Ḥusayn.[25] Not unexpectedly, Balādhurī and Khwārazmī include a much more violent series of threats directed by 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād towards 'Umar b. Sa'd in the event that he refused to lead the army against Ḥusayn. According to this version, when 'Umar b. Sa'd attempted to refuse politely, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād replied, "If you don't go confront Ḥusayn, I will remove you from your position, and destroy your house, and cut off your head!"[26]

Although the varying accounts differ in degree of violence and the exact nature of the circumstances that resulted in 'Umar b. Sa'd's being offered the governorship of Ray, the depictions do agree that 'Umar b. Sa'd was offered the prestigious position of governor of the wealthy city, as well as threatened with decapitation if he refused to lead the Umayyad troops against Ḥusayn. Aside from Khwārazmī's narrative, which demonizes 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād and other Umayyads whenever possible, these depictions appear to serve only to portray 'Umar b. Sa'd as having sold his principles for a position of leadership. And, although these accounts appear in two additional sources (Ṭabarī and Iṣfahānī) the *isnād*s of the accounts all go back ot Abū Mikhnaf and other Kūfans, which seems to indicate that such depictions were the result of a post-Karbalā'

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[25] Khwārazmī, 239 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham).

[26] *La'in lam tasir ilayhi la a'zalannaka, wa la ahdumanna dāraka, wa aḍhrubu 'unuqaka.* Balādhurī (← Ḥusayn); Khwārazmī, 240 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham).

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'witch hunt' type of attempt to assign blame for the killing of Ḥusayn.[27] These accounts, in particular, appear to have been retrospectively designed to assign blame on 'Umar b. Sa'd: the general of the army that attacked Ḥusayn, and the ideal scapegoat.

The Economy of Information

Unlike the economy of propaganda, which later Sunnī historians such as Ibn al-Athīr and Dhahabī found dubious, the remainder of the chapter will examine depictions of economic motivations in the Karbalā' narratives that Muslim historians of both the early and later periods seem to have agreed upon: the Umayyad use of informants, soldiers pillaging Ḥusayn's camp after the battle, and the use of foreign *mawālī* and *ghulām*s for the most vile crimes against Ḥusayn. With regard to Umayyad use of informants prior to Karbalā', it seems that most were not professional informers, but everyday people who, by informing Umayyad authorities on the activities of Ḥusayn's Kūfan supporters could either gain some wealth for themselves, save themselves from the threats of the Umayyads, or even curry favor with them. One of the most common examples of this is a scenario that appears at the beginning of most Karbalā' narratives and depicts Nu'mān b. Bashīr's piety/genealogy consciousness as being criticized by the Umayyad spies around him.[28] These informants are then portrayed as having reported to

[27] The details of the transmission of these and other accounts will be discussed in detail in the comprehensive *isnād* analysis in the conclusion.

[28] Dīnawarī, 231 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 348 (← Zakarīyā b. Yaḥyā al-Darīr ← Aḥmad b.

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Damascus, which then resulted in Nu'mān's removal and 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's subsequent appointment as his successor. Another recurring example of this reappearing consistently in the sources[29] is the depiction of the son of Ṭaw'a, an old woman who took in Muslim b. 'Aqīl and gave him shelter after 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād suppressed the Kūfan insurrection and initiated a witch-hunt for him. Her son is depicted as eager to acquire the monetary reward for finding Muslim b. 'Aqīl. He informed the authorities at the castle, and 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād appointed a regiment of troops to go to his mother's home and to capture Muslim b. 'Aqīl. Such accounts serve not only as depictions of the Kūfans' willingness to compromise their support of Ḥusayn, but also of the effectiveness of Umayyad tactics, which, by a mixture of instilling fear into the populace and playing on the desire for increased wealth, seem to have turned former Ḥusaynid loyalists and otherwise unaffiliated individuals into part-time informants whenever the opportunity arose.

In fact, the sources' depictions show that the Umayyad leadership made use of such opportunities to ensure they were fully aware of regional developments at each phase of their propaganda campaign against the piety/genealogy consciousness of

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Janāb al-Maṣṣīsī ← Khālid b. Yazīd b. Asad b. 'Abdullāh al-Qasrī ← 'Ammār al-Duhnī ← Abū Ja'far); Khwārazmī, 197-8 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); Siyar a'lām, 306 (← Aḥmad b. Janāb al-Maṣṣīsī, ← Khālid b. Yazīd al-Qasrī ← 'Ammār al-Duhnī ← Abū Ja'far al-Bāqir); Ibn Ḥajar, 78 (← 'Ammār b. Mu'āwīya al-Duhnī ← Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Ḥasan , sic.); Majlisī, 44:336 (← al-Mufīd).

[29] Dīnawarī, 240 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 373 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Mujālid b. Sa'īd); Mas'ūdī, 58 (n.i.); Iṣfahānī, 105 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Mujālid b. Sa'īd); Khwārazmī, 208 (Aḥmad b. A'tham); Ibn Ḥajar, 80 (n.i.).

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Ḥusayn.[30] Such accounts depict deliberate attempts to make the local people aware that there were informants in their midst. In fact, in one communiqué from 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād to Ḥurr b. Yazīd al-Riyāḥī after Ḥurr and his troops confronted Ḥusayn but before the two sides engaged in battle, the governor told his general to have no mercy in dealing with Ḥusayn. In the letter he stated, "Tighten your grip on Ḥusayn and his companions as soon as this letter reaches you ... and I have ordered my messenger to inform me of what you do."[31] But, in addition to this order for unnecessary harshness, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād adds that the messenger who was delivering the message was actually an informant who would observe and then report back to the governor as to whether or not his orders were followed.[32] These two examples in particular (of the son of Ṭaw'a and of the informer assigned to 'Umar b. Sa'd) appear repeatedly and consistently in the sources, but there are also a number of isolated examples of such depictions.

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[30] This is yet another aspect of modern propaganda theory that appears in the early Karbalā' narratives: intelligence to keep the coordinators of the propaganda campaign aware of current developments in the field. See: Allen Dulles, *The Craft of Intelligence* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 9-28; John P. Finnegan, *Military Intelligence* (Washington: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1998), 7-12; Phillip Knightley, *The Second Oldest Profession* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1987), 3-8.

[31] *Fa ja'ji' bi al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī wa aṣḥābihi bi al-makān alladhī yuwāfīka kitābī wa qad amartu ḥāmila kitābi hādhā an yakhbirani bi mā kāna minka fī dhālika.* Balādhurī, 176 (n.i.).

[32] Balādhurī, 176 (n.i.); Dīnawarī, 251 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 308 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jundub ← 'Uqba b. Sim'ān); Khwārazmī, 231 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); Al-Kāmil, 52 (n.i.); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 32 (n.i.).

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One such example is an instance when Dīnawarī mentions explicitly the presence of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's spies at Kūfa and the Ḥusaynid-loyalists' fear of them.[33] Also, Ṭabarī includes an account during the battle of Karbalā', when someone ridiculed Shimr b. Dhī al-Jawshan for attacking Ḥusayn's women. When Shimr demanded the name of the speaker, he was afraid to give his name for fear of retribution from the governor.[34] There are even accounts in later sources that, even after the battle of Karbalā', people were afraid to spread the news of the battle and poets were afraid to compose poetry on the battle, for fear of being reported to the Umayyads.[35] It is examples such as these, as well as other isolated instances, that depict the Umayyads' use of common citizens who served as informants because of fear of Umayyad threats to their lives or property, or for want of financial rewards, or some combination of the two.

In fact, the Kūfans' reactions, or more appropriately, the lack thereof, to the previously-mentioned public execution of Hāni' b. 'Urwa is nothing less than a major indication within the Karbalā' narratives that portrays the effectiveness of this tactic on the part of the Umayyads. Unlike Muslim b. 'Aqīl, who had no blood relation to any of the Kūfans, Hāni' b. 'Urwa was the *shaykh* of one of the most populous tribes of Kūfa,

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[33] Dīnawarī, 236 (n.i.).

[34] Ṭabarī, 438 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Sulaymān b. Abī Rāshid ← Ḥamīd b. Muslim).

[35] Iṣfahānī, 121; Usd al-ghāba, 21 (← Abū Aḥmad al-'Askarī ← al-Awzā'ī and al-Zuhrī).

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and allies with three major Yamanī tribes in the city.[36] After suppressing Muslim b. 'Aqīl's rebellion and establishing his authority over the Kūfans, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's orders for Hāni' b. 'Urwa to be taken to the market and publicly executed resulted in no reaction whatsoever from Hāni''s fellow tribesmen, nor from their allies. Having been imprisoned in the castle since before Muslim's uprising, after the threats and bribes that 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād announced from the pulpit in the aftermath of the uprising, no one in Kūfa dared come to Hāni''s aid when he called for help. Being that he was an influential tribal leader in Kūfa at the time, it is quite significant that not one of his tribesmen or allies would come to his aid. Such factors make this example in itself a testament to the apparent effectiveness of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's 'iron-fist' policy in dealing with the potential supporters of Husayn. Furthermore, as a number of sources mention specifically, it is also an indication of the local fear of Umayyad informants in general.[37]

However, as in the previous section with rhetoric, there are also numerous references to bribery and threats on the part of the Umayyads that appear quite dubious, and, upon careful examination, reveal themselves to be possible constructions of later authors. One of these is a reference to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād giving sums of money to

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[36] For details, see chapter 3, mass-dissemination of anti-Ḥusayn propaganda.

[37] A number of sources also actually mention the people's fear of Umayyad informants explicitly. See: Mas'ūdī, 59 (n.i.); Iṣfahānī, 121; Usd al-ghāba, 21 (← Abū Aḥmad al-'Askarī ← al-Awzā'ī and al-Zuhrī); Majlisī, 44:358 (← al-Mufīd).

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those who, after Ḥusayn was killed, galloped their horses over Ḥusayn's decapitated body repeatedly. Portrayals of his rewarding the vindictive mutilation of Ḥusayn's body may have been attempts to demonize the character of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, and, as with previous examples of dubious reports, this also occurs only in middle period and later Shī'ī sources[38] with no apparent reference to any such incidents in early sources, neither Sunnī nor Shī'ī. Another example is that of Yazīd paying sums of money to Umm Kulthūm (one of the daughters of Ḥusayn) upon the arrival of the prisoners at his court in Damascus, which appears in no source other than Majlisī's.[39] Again, the fact that such an account appears for the first time nearly a millenium after the battle of Karbalā' is a relatively clear indication that it may be a fabricated account. Another problematic account in this regard is dubious for other reasons. Although it appears in the earliest detailed source, Ibn Sa'd, it is an account that makes no logical sense and contradicts completely the versions depicted in the vast majority of other accounts of the post-Karbalā' aftermath at Kūfa. This is a reference to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād offering a

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[38] The first that mention the actual trampling are Balādhurī, 204 (n.i.); Ṭabarī also mentions Ibn Ziyād's ordering this in a letter, 415 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Sulaymān b. Abī Rāshid ← Ḥamīd b. Muslim); Iṣfahānī, 118 (← al-Madā'inī ← Mukhlid b. Ḥamza b. Bayd ← Ḥabbāb b. Mūsā ← Ḥamza b. Bayd ← Hāni' b. Thubayt al-Qāyiḍī); Khwārazmī, 245 (←Aḥmad b. A'tham); al-Kāmil, 55 (n.i.). Nevertheless, the first indications of offering an economic incentive for trampling Husayn's decapitated body appears in Ibn Ṭāwūs, 57 (n.i.), and later in Majlisī, 45:60 (← Ḥamīd b. Muslim). Interestingly, the narration included by Majlisī ends by mentioning that an analysis of the genealogies of all ten of those who trampled their horses over the body of Ḥusayn revealed that all ten were bastards. Such commentary shows clearly the intent of the author/narrator.

[39] Majlisī, 45:197 (n.i., *rūwiya fī ba'ḍ mu'allifāti aṣḥābinā*).

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reward, after the battle of Karbalā', for whoever finds and brings to his court 'Alī b. Ḥusayn.[40] This is particularly problematic because it is nearly impossible that the eldest (and according to some accounts, the only) surviving male of the battle of Karbalā' be 'lost', after having been rounded up and taken prisoner with the rest of Ḥusayn's women and children. The account makes it appear as though 'Alī was not herded along with the rest of the prisoners, but taken as a guest in the home of one of the soldiers who fought at Karbalā'. This itself is highly unlikely, considering the chain of command of the army at the battle, and accounts of the general 'Umar b. Sa'd giving orders accounting for the most minor details of the battle and taking of prisoners. But, the extreme unlikeliness, historically speaking, of the most important of the prisoners being left unguarded for days is not the only factor that makes this account dubious. The fact that it appears in no source later than Ibn Sa'd's, other than that of Qāḍī Nu'mān the Fāṭimī, is also a testament to the fact that nearly every later writer questioned the veracity of this account. The fact that even the most 'radical' of the later Shī'ī scholars do not mention this is itself a very potent statement to that effect.

The Economy of Confrontation: Pillaging and Trophies

Among the themes that appear in the depictions of events both during and after the battle of Karbalā' are those that serve to 'expose' the reasons behind the participation

[40] Ibn Sa'd, 79 (← IS); Qāḍī Nu'mān, 104 (n.i.).

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of many of the soldiers in the battle, indicating that most soldiers were not so concerned with upholding the fledgling Umayyad dynasty. Rather, such depictions indicate that a large number of the soldiers were involved in order to acquire either immediate wealth in the form of booty, women, or some sort of position by currying favor with the Umayyad establishment. The two most recurrent themes that portray these points most clearly are those of pillaging after the battle of Karbalā', and Umayyad soldiers fighting amongst each other over the decapitated heads of Ḥusayn's companions. An examination of these two themes in particular will show just how important a role financial considerations played in the mindsets of the individuals who chose to participate in fighting Ḥusayn.

One of the things that depict this most clearly is the large number of references to soldiers' pillaging of Ḥusayn's camp after the battle. Such references occur in nearly every narrative source, ranging from the earliest, all the way up to Majlisī's.[41] The historical possibility of the army's pillaging of Ḥusayn's camp is not at all unreasonable, and we have accounts depicting it in both early and later sources, and both Sunnī and Shī'ī sources attesting to it. What is interesting, however, is that the way in which the sources portray this event varies according the biases of the authors and/or the time. For example, some authors make the army's disregard for Ḥusayn's camp extreme, indicating that not only did the army pillage the property from the saddle-packs of the camels and

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[41] Ibn Sa'd, 77 (← IS); Balādhurī, 204 (n.i.); Dīnawarī, 258 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 453 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī); Khwārazmī, 2:38 (← Abū Mikhnaf); al-Kāmil, 78 (n.i.); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 54 (n.i.); Siyar a'lām, 303 (←SA-IS); Majlisī, 45:58 (← Ibn Ṭāwūs).

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the beasts themselves, but they also pillaged the clothes from off the women's backs.[42] Some, such as Khwārazmī and Majlisī, go so far as to mention that the pillagers ripped the earrings from the women's ears.[43] But, as with previous examples that appear only in the works of Khwārazmī and Majlisī, these also appear to be convenient authorial exaggerations. Although it is quite likely that the pillagers did in fact pillage the earrings of the women in Ḥusayn's camp, that they ripped the jewelry bloodily from the women's ears is most likely an exaggeration. Similarly, there is an account that appears only in Majlisī's work that refers to one pillager in particular who cried while removing gold and other jewelry from Fāṭima d. Ḥusayn. Supposedly, upon her inquiry as to the reason for his crying, he responded that his tears were because he was pillaging from the women of Ḥusayn's *ahl al-bayt*, but he then continued to remove her valuables while sobbing. [44] Being that this also appears only in the work of Majlisī, this also appears to be quite a dubious account.

However, one of the most interesting things about Majlisī's accounts of the pillaging is that he took great pains to emphasize that the women were stripped of their veils and were left with their faces uncovered. It is puzzling that, although a number of

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[42] Balādhurī, 204 (n.i.); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 55 (n.i.); Siyar a'lām, 303 (← SA-IS).

[43] Khwārazmī, 2:38 (← Abū Mikhnaf); Majlisī, 45:60 (← Muḥammad b. Abī Ṭālib).

[44] Majlisī, 45:82 (← al-Ṣadūq ← Abū Mutawakkil ← al-Sa'dābādī ← al-Barqī ← his father ← Muḥammad b. Sinān ← Abū al-Jārud ← Ziyād b. Mundhir ← 'Abdullāh b. al-Ḥasan ← his mother Fāṭima d. al-Ḥusayn).

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earlier sources mention that the pillagers took the clothes off the women's backs, none of them place such emphasis on the impropriety of forcing the women to have their faces uncovered.[45] A possible explanation is that by the later middle period Islamicate society developed a much more strict sense of *ḥijāb* (Islamic womens' dress code) covering than had been acceptable in earlier periods. Certainly the greater emphasis that appeared in the middle periods on the virtue of women[46] may have also manifested itself in an intensification of the qualifications for proper *ḥijāb*, eventually interpreting the mandatory *ḥijāb* as meaning not only covering of the head, but also of the face.[47] If this was a phenomenon that had taken place after the earlier sources, and was firmly established as part of the norm in Islamicate society by the time of Majlisī, that would certainly explain Majlisī's concern for the visibility of the women's faces while sources prior to Majlisī apparently lacked such concern. In general, however, the numerous accounts of pillaging and their consistent appearance throughout the sources serve to portray how financial considerations were likely one of the main factors leading to the

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[45] Majlisī, 45:60 (← Muḥammad b. Abī Ṭālib).

[46] For details on the changing attitudes towards women's virtue and the veil in the middle Islamic periods, see: Jacob Lassner, *Demonizing the Queen of Sheba: Boundaries of Gender and Culture in Postbiblical Judaism and Medieval Islam* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1993), 65-87; Mina Naila, *Women in Islam: Tradition and Transition in the Middle East* (New York: Seaview Books, 1981), 25-42; Mai Yamānī, *Feminism and Islam: Legal and Literary Perspectives.* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 69-102.

[47] Although this point is not of major significance to the battle of Karbalā', historians may find this note useful in the study of the development of the specifications for the women's dress code in the Islamic *sharī'a.*

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participation of such a large number of soldiers in the battle against Ḥusayn. Some sources even go into great detail describing the jewelry, silks and other fabrics, spices, and other prized commodities that a large and prestigious caravan such as Ḥusayn's was transporting. [48]

Another recurring depiction serves to show that many of the soldiers involved in the battle of Karbalā' saw their involvement as the best way to not only receive financial rewards, but also to curry favor with the Umayyad establishment. Certainly one of the best ways to do so was to return from the battle with tangible proof of one's loyalty to the governor. In the Karbalā' narratives, this takes the form of either returning with the head of Ḥusayn or a companion as a trophy and gift to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād (or to Yazīd) or of taking the responsibility for killing a specific companion. In some accounts, after having cooperated in killing one of Ḥusayn's companions (such as Ḥabīb b. al-Maẓāhir or 'Uthmān b. 'Alī), various factions of the army are depicted as fighting over just who had the right to claim the head and present it to the Umayyad leadership. [49] In some of these accounts the killer explicitly demanded a monetary reward when presenting the head. One such instance is repeated in nearly every narrative: the account of the killing of

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[48] This is especially plausible when noting that, earlier in the narratives Ḥusayn intercepted and confiscated a caravan of luxurious gifts to Yazīd from his governor at Yaman.

[49] Ibn Sa'd, 74 (← IS); Balādhurī, 195(n.i.); Dīnawarī, 257 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 440 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Sulaymān b. Abī Rāshid ← Ḥamīd b. Muslim), 444 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Numayr b. Wa'la ← Rabī' b. Tamīm); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 60 (n.i.).

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Qāsim, the cousin of Ḥusayn. The accounts portray Qāsim as a harmless young man who was no real threat, but a member of the army insisted that he be the one to kill Qāsim, causing even his fellow troops to question his intentions.[50] This seems to have been the case for one man who sought the easiest possible way of currying favor with the Umayyads, by getting the head of one of Ḥusayn's family as a trophy, but without having to fight the most challenging among Ḥusayn's companions. This is the most striking of such depictions in the narratives, which show that one of the main motivations for the involvement of quite a number of the soldiers who fought against Ḥusayn were economically-driven on the one hand, and on the other hand, the chance to curry favor with the side that they foresaw would be the victor, thereby ensuring their own security in the aftermath of the battle of Karbalā'.

The Economy of Militarization: Mawālī and Ghulāms

Nevertheless, in spite of the accounts portraying the Umayyads' pulpit polemics, bribery and threats as effective for the most part, there are some accounts in the sources indicating that in some instances, even all of these factors together were not enough to

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[50] Ibn Sa'd, 75 (← IS); Balādhurī, 201 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 447 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Sulaymān b. Abī Rāshid ← Ḥamīd b. Muslim); Iṣfahānī, 93 (← Aḥmad b. Īsā ← al-Ḥusayn b. Naṣr ← his father ← 'Umar b. Sa'd), 115 (al-Madā'inī ← 'Abbās b. Muḥammad b. Ruzayq ← 'Alī b. Ṭalḥa ← Abū Mikhnaf ← 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Yazīd b. Jābir ← Ḥamīd b. Muslim, and by another *isnād*: ← 'Umar b. Sa'īd al-Basrī ← Abū Mikhnaf ← Zuhayr b. 'Abdullāh al-Khath'amī ← Aḥmad b. Sa'īd ← Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥasan al-'Alawī ← Bakr b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb ← Ismā'īl b. Abī Idrīs ← his father ← Ja'far b. Muḥammad ← his father); Qāḍī Nu'mān, 17,18 (← Ḥamīd b. Muslim); Khwārazmī, 2: 27 (← Abū Mikhnaf). Note sometimes the narratives replace Qāsim with 'Alī b. Ḥusayn.

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legitimize some of the most heinous acts perpetrated by the pro-Umayyad forces against Ḥusayn's women and children during and after the battle of Karbalā'. In order to overcome this problem, the Umayyad generals appear to have assigned the most ruthless military assignments to foreign *ghulām* troops who, as we shall see, lacked the sensitivity to and awareness of the aura of piety/genealogy consciousness that surrounded Ḥusayn.

Although the extent to which foreign *ghulām* troops were included in the early Islamic armies and the precise roles which they played are debated, the fact that they did exist and played at least some role even as early as the battle of Karbalā' is relatively clear. Aside from the corroborating evidence provided by the Karbalā'-related sources, a number of very interesting studies indicate the use of African and Turkish *ghulām* troops by the early Umayyad administration.[51] For instance, a record of a *zanj* rebellion in Basra in 76/698, barely a decade after Karbalā', is highly significant.[52] The fact that there were enough African slaves to instigate a revolt significant enough to be recorded in the historical texts by that time indicates that there must have been at least some presence of such African slaves in the area in the years prior to the revolt, though perhaps not necessarily in such great numbers. Also, despite the fact that Turkish military slavery in

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[51] See: Bernard Lewis, *Race and Color in Islam* (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1971), 69-80; C.E. Bosworth, "Recruitment, Muster, and Review in Medieval Islamic Armies," *War, Technology, and Society in the Middle East* (1975): 59-77; Daniel Pipes, "African Troops in Easly Islamic Armies," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 13 (1980): 94; al-Zubaydī, 74-102.

[52] Jere L. Bacharach, "African Military Slaves in the Medieval Middle East: The Cases of 'Irāq (869-955) and Egypt (868-1171)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 13 (1981): 471-95.

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Islam became much more significant only later, there is evidence that even prior to the battle of Karbalā', their services were employed by the early Umayyad dynasty. Daniel Pipes mentions in his "Turks in Early Muslim Service" that,

> Turkish domination did not begin during the very first years of Islam, nor did it suddenly occur in the reign of al-Mu'tasim (218-227 A.H./833-842 C.E.), as is commonly thought. Rather, the Turks played a small, but growing role from the 50's A.H./670's C.E. and on...[53]

In fact, part of the evidence which Pipes uses to prove this point involves 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād himself, prior to his involvement in the events of the battle of Karbalā'. Pipes indicates that,

> Although the earliest certain date for a Turk in Muslim service is 60 A.H./680 C.E, it appears likely that Turks fought in numbers for the Muslims a few years earlier. In 54 A.H./674 C.E. 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, the Umayyad governor of Khurāsān, vanquished the city of Bukharā and its Turkish allies. A year later, upon being appointed governor of Basra, he took with him 2,000 or 4,000 of the Bukhāran captives as slaves. These captives formed a military unit known as the *Bukhārīya*, which was famed for the skill of its archers.[54]

It is not unlikely that some of these may have been the very same precision-archers that are mentioned in the Karbalā'-related sources as piercing an infant's throat from afar, or the center of Ḥusayn's own forehead. The existence of these African, Persian, and Turkish soldiers in Umayyad military service is significant not only because of their

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[53] Daniel Pipes, "Turks in Early Muslim Service," *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 2 (1978): 85.

[54] Ibid., 86.

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military capabilities, but also because their purely economic motivations in military service allowed them to serve in military activities that the local Arabian soldiery would not. In addition, many of these Africans, Persians, or Turks lacked any connection to not only the early Madinese community that was so deeply aware of the piety/genealogy consciousness of Ḥusayn, but also lacked any ingrained loyalty to Arabian culture in general, with all its unwritten rules of conduct during battle. Such troops were thus the perfect candidates to assign with tasks that Arabians would not have even considered undertaking. Even if successfully bribed or threatened to disregard their consciousness of Ḥusayn as a pious grandson of the Prophet and to fight against him on the battlefield, none of the Arabian troops seemed to be willing to fatally attack innocent children, or the women of Ḥusayn's camp. In addition, because of the Arabian tribal custom of blood revenge Arabian troops had significant cause to fear tribal retaliation and the initiation of intergenerational blood feuds. Following the orders for such killings was far less problematic for the African, Turkish or Persian mercenary troops who, rather than having an ingrained connection to Arabian culture or any tribal blood ties to the local Arabian population, had a vested economic interest in obedient military service to their superiors. Thus, the way in which the Umayyad establishment appears to have dealt with this problem represents not only one of the most significant themes of the Karbalā' narratives, but also politically a very practical solution.

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A primary example of the use of foreign mercenary *ghulām* soldiers specifically because of their lack of blood ties to Arabian tribes occurred even before the battle of Karbalā'. The depiction of the execution of Hāni' b. 'Urwa, as mentioned earlier in a different context, is a perfect example of the use of foreign *ghulām* mercenary soldiers for such purposes. The sources portray 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's use of the same tactic in assigning a Turk *ghulām* to execute Hāni' b. 'Urwa publicly at the sheep market at Kūfa.[55] Being that Hāni' was the tribal elder of a tribe that, along with its tribal allies numbered in the tens of thousands, none of the local Kūfans dared to have his blood on their hands, and even 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād himself, in assigning the Turk *ghulām* with the responsibility, seems to have been afraid of taking the responsibility himself. With Hāni''s blood on the hands of a foreign *ghulām*, however, any repercussions from a possible blood feud would not have affected any of the Arabians. Thus, in addition to their lack of piety/genealogy consciousness, the foreign *ghulām*s' lack of blood relations to any of the local Arabian tribes also made them perfect candidates to be used as potential scapegoats by the Umayyads.

Furthermore, there are a number of instances of depictions of such use of foreign mercenary troops at the battle of Karbalā' itself. In fact, the sources indicate that two foreign *mawālī*, one of Yazīd's and one of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's, were the first to

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[55] Ṭabarī, 379 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Ṣaq'ab b. al-Zuhayr ← 'Awn b. Abī Juḥayfa); Khwārazmī, 214 (Aḥmad b. A'tham); al-Kāmil, 36 (n.i.); Majlisī, 44:358 (← al-Mufīd).

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initiate the fighting at the battle.[56] In addition, during the battle of Karbalā' itself, two particularly ruthless killings are also described in the sources as having been perpetrated by foreign *ghulām* or *mawālī* mercenary soldiers. One of the two prime examples of such heinous crimes for which foreign mercenary troops were used is the deliberate and brutal slaying of Ḥusayn's youngest child, who was only a few months old at the time. This oft-repeated account depicts how, during the heat of the day of 'Āshūrā', just prior to the battle and after three days of being deprived access to the water of the Euphrates, Ḥusayn brought out his crying infant and urged the army to at least not deprive the thirsty children of water. Seeing that the troops were becoming emotionally disturbed at the results of their siege of Ḥusayn's camp and its effects on the women and children, Shimr b. Dhī al-Jawshan ordered a *ghulām* to shoot an arrow and kill the infant, to which he complied.[57] After removing the arrow from the infant child's throat, Ḥusayn is depicted as having

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[56] Ṭabarī, 429 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Abū Janāb); Khwārazmī, 2:8 (← al-Sayyid Abū Ṭālib ← his father ← Ḥamza b. al-Qāsim al-'Alawī ← Bakr b. 'Abdullāh b. Ḥabīb ← Tamīm b. Bahlūl al-Dabbī Abū Muḥammad ← 'Abdullāh b. al-Ḥusayn b. Tamīm ← Muhammad b. Zakarīyā ← Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Qāsim al-Taymī ← 'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān b. 'Abdullāh b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan ← his father ← his grandfather ← 'Abdullāh b. al-Ḥasan); Majlisī, 45:12 (← al-Mufīd).

[57] Ibn al-Zubayr, 150 (← sequence Z); Ibn Sa'd, 73 (← IS); Dīnawarī, 258 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 448 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← 'Uqba b. Bishr al-Asadī ← Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn); Iṣfahānī, 94 (← Aḥmad b. Shabīb ← Aḥmad b. al-Ḥārith ← al-Madā'inī ← Abū Mikhnaf ← Sulaymān b. Abī Rāshid ← Ḥamīd b. Muslim, and another *isnād* from: ← Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ashnāthī ← 'Abbād b. Ya'qūb ← Mawrī' b. Suwayd b. Qays ← *man shahida al-Ḥusayn*); Qāḍī Nu'mān, 15 (n.i.); Khwārazmī, 2:32 (← Abū Mikhnaf); al-Kāmil, 75 (n.i.); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 49 (n.i.); Siyar a'lām, 309 (← Aḥmad b. Janāb al-Maṣṣīsī ← Khālid b. Yazīd al-Qasrī ← 'Ammār al-Duhnī ← Abū Ja'far al-Bāqir); Majlisī, 45:46 (← al-Mufīd).

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gathered the child's blood in his palm and cursing the army for their callousness. This is portrayed consistently in the narratives as an unforgivable war-crime, and the depiction of the event as such, if not direct condemnation of it, spans not only across the centuries of sources, but also across sectarian biases that are apparent in other parts of the Karbalā' narratives.[58] The only oddity is Dhahabī's *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, in which the author makes use of passive constructions in the Arabic which make it appear as if the child was struck accidentally.[59] Being that this is an account so clearly documented and attested to by nearly every earlier and later source, including a number that are of extreme and opposite biases (such as Ibn Sa'd and Majlisī), it is quite clear that, for some underlying reason, Dhababī was tempted to disregard the depictions adopted by an overwhelming majority of his predecessors, and composed his source in such a way that it depicted the killing of the infant as accidental. Nevertheless, the depictions of the overwhelming majority of the sources both prior to and after Dhahabī agree that the infant's killing was deliberate, and that none of the Arabian Kūfans were inclined to commit such a crime. The pro-Umayyad generals, in what seems to have been their awareness of this fact, are portrayed as having made use of foreign *ghulām* troops to carry out such orders as were deemed inappropriate by the regular Arabian troops. As with many other depictions in

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[58] This depiction is reported by Ibn al-Zubayr (a Zaydī), Ibn Sa'd, Ṭabarī, and Ibn al-Athīr (early and later Sunnīs), Qāḍi Nu'mān (a Fāṭimī), Khwārazmī (a pro-Būyid Sunnī), and Majlisī (Twelver Shī'ī).

[59] As we shall see in later source-analysis, such a depiction was convient in terms of the author's construction of his particular brand of the Karbalā' narrative.

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the Karbalā' narratives, this example generally serves 'Abbāsid historiographic interests in that it demonizes the Umayyads, (as shall be detailed in the general conclusion) and we can not be certain how much, if any, of the account can be trusted.

Nevertheless, at least with regard to the use of foreign troops, the killing of Ḥusayn's infant child is not the only such example. Another prime example is the killing of one of the women of Ḥusayn's camp, which was portrayed as having been committed by a Persian *ghulām*. In this instance, during the battle of Karbalā' itself, after her son was killed, a mother took a tent pole and walked out onto the battlefield cursing the army for what they were doing to Ḥusayn and his followers. A general ordered a Persian *ghulām* to kill her, and the Persian attacked her and violently clubbed her to death with a mace.[60] As with the example of the murder of the infant child, this is also a depiction indicating that the Arabian Kūfans, in spite of having been affected by Umayyad rhetoric against Ḥusayn, and even when that failed, by bribery and threats, did not dare to attack and kill elderly women in a military battle. In order to overcome such obstacles to the implementation of the Umayyads' 'iron-fist' policy at Karbalā', Umayyad generals are depicted as having made use of foreign *ghulām* troops for such war-crimes, taking advantage of the fact that these foreign *ghulām*s were neither aware of the

[60] Balādhurī, 194 (← 'Umar b. Shabba ← Abū Ahmad al-Zubayrī ← his uncle, al-Faḍīl b. al-Zubayr ← 'Umar al-Bazzāz ← Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī); Ṭabarī, 438 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Numayr b. Wa'la ← Ayyūb b. Mishrah al-Khaywānī); Khwārazmī, 2:13, 17 (← Abū Mikhnaf); al-Kāmil, 69 (n.i.).

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piety/genealogy consciousness surrounding Ḥusayn, nor concerned with traditional Arabian tribal morés during battle.

Furthermore, in addition to depictions of the killing of tribal leaders, women, and infants, the depictions of the killing and decapitation of Ḥusayn himself also appears to fall into this category of war-crimes assigned to foreign mercenaries. Although a large number of soldiers from a great variety of tribal affiliations participated in injuring Ḥusayn with swords, spears, and arrows,[61] there are indications in the sources that the two people who actually killed Ḥusayn and then decapitated him were probably also foreign slave mercenaries. In fact, the two soldiers that are mentioned in the sources alternately as the killers and decapitators of Ḥusayn are identified by name as Sinān and his comrade Khawlī.[62] An inspection of biographical dictionaries such as that of Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1449)[63] revealed that, although the name Sinān does appear occasionally, a number of these Sināns are mentioned as possibly being foreign *mawālī*, indicating that the name Sinān was not unpopular among the foreigners who acquired

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[61] This communal participation seems to have been a deliberate attempt to disperse the responsibility of attacking Ḥusayn's throughout the entire tribal network of Kūfa, so no single tribe can be pinpointed for retaliation, since a member of every tribe played some role in wounding Husayn, no matter how small.

[62] Ibn Sa'd, 75 (← IS); Balādhurī, 203 (n.i.); Dīnawarī, 258 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 453 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Saq'ab b. al-Zuhayr ← Hamīd b. Muslim); al-Kāmil, 78 (n.i.); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 53 (n.i.); Siyar a'lām, 299 (← SA-IS); Tārīkh al-Islam, 5:13 (← Ibn Sa'd); Majlisī, 45:32, 55 (← al-Mufīd and Ibn Ṭāwūs).

[63] Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalāni, *Al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥāba*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī (Cairo: Dar Nahdat Misr li al-Ṭab' wa al-Nashr, 1970), 3:155-60. Note entries 3508,3513, 3523, and 3525.

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Arabic names. More striking, however, is the fact that the name Khawlī does not appear at all. In another classical source by 'Asqalānī,[64] the name Khawlī appears only twice. In the first entry, the individual is identified specifically as being either a foreign *ghulām* or *mawlā*, and in the second, he is identified by first name only, and lacking a family name. This seems to indicate that he was a foreigner of unknown ancestry and not yet affiliated with an Arabian tribe. Because of the rarity of this name among Arabians, and the fact that both documented occurrences of the name in Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalāni's work appear to indicate that the individuals in question were of foreign origins, it is quite likely that the Khawlī who is mentioned in the Karbalā' narratives was himself a foreign mercenary, and because the fact that both appear in the sources to be comrades, it is not unlikely that both were of the same social class of foreign mercenary troops. The evidence from the biographical dictionaries, as well as the fact that they were assigned to kill and decapitate Ḥusayn, in light of the previously mentioned evidence of the usage of foreign slave mercenaries all lead to the conclusion that even the killing of Ḥusayn and his decapitation are depicted as having been committed by such foreign mercenaries that had neither blood relations to Arabian tribes, nor any awareness of Ḥusayn's aura of piety/genealogy consciousness. Not only do such depictions serve to demonize the Umayyads even further, but in the association of the most callous acts in the Karbalā' narratives to the Umayyads' foreign mercenaries, such depictions also serve to further reinforce Ḥusayn's

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[64] -----, *Tabṣīr al-muntabih bi taḥīir al-mushtabih*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī (Cairo: Dar al-Misrīya li al-Ta'līf wa al-Tarjuma, 1966), 2:542.

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aura of piety/genealogy consciousness by stressing the Umayyads' reliance on and association with such impious foreigners, whose (non-Arabian) genealogies were unknown.

Defections: The Limitations of Economic Propaganda

Perhaps one of the most significant of the recurring themes depicted in the narrative sources on the battle of Karbalā' is that of defections. Whereas those who left Ḥusayn's camp at various points during his journey from the Ḥijāz to 'Irāq were doing so to avoid battle and to save their lives, [65] accounts indicating defections from the militarily dominant Umayyad army to Ḥusayn's overwhelmingly outnumbered camp appear suicidal, and are impossible to ignore. Not only do such reports appear in nearly every source, but they are also highly significant in that they appear to be dramatic literary responses to the previously introduced concept that the Umayyad establishment promoted an active propaganda campaign to destroy the aura of piety/genealogy consciousness that surrounded Ḥusayn. The portrayals of such defections in themselves are excellent literary devices that serve to 'expose' the Umayyad polemic against Ḥusayn. As is the case with

[65] A large number of individuals and families, particularly bedouin tribesmen, appear to have joined Ḥusayn at various points along his journey to 'Irāq for reasons of security during travel through the desert. But, when it became clear to them that the road Ḥusayn was traveling was one that led to death, these individuals separated from Ḥusayn's camp and went their own ways. The most dramatic instance of this was when, a few short days away from Kūfa, Ḥusayn received the news that his messenger Muslim b. 'Aqīl and his supporter Hāni' b. 'Urwa were killed by 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād. After this, none remained with him but those who eventually died with him at Karbalā'.

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so many other themes in the Karbalā' sources, this is something which is too often ignored and must be examined more carefully in order to achieve a better understanding of precisely what the socio-political dynamics of the first Islamic century were and how they operated. Why would any single person, much less a large number of people, willingly defect from a militarily dominant army of thousands in order to join a small band of just over seventy men and boys doomed to face defeat and possible slaughter? What could possibly have motivated someone to make such a suicidal decision, knowing full well that it would result in nothing but certain death? Although there is no way to be certain, the sources portray several possibilities as being the causes for these depictions. Among these is the possibility that the initial reasons for their joining the Umayyad army to fight Ḥusayn in the first place became no longer credible in their own eyes. As discussed in the previous chapter, there were numerous phases in the development of the Umayyad propaganda against Ḥusayn, and people's initial convictions and acceptance of a particular phase of the Umayyad propaganda did not necessarily indicate acceptance of later phases of the rhetoric propagated by the Umayyads. Some sources portray the events such that, in confronting Ḥusayn face to face at Karbalā' and having the opportunity to hear his own words (itself unlikely during a heated battle), these defectors were afforded the first real chance to hear Ḥusayn speak for himself rather than simply accepting the Umayyad rhetoric so effectively propagated from the pulpits. According to these portrayals, the battle of Karbalā' itself was, for many who enlisted to fight against

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Ḥusayn, their first exposure to Ḥusayn's own definition of himself and his actions, rather than the Umayyads' definitions of Ḥusayn and his actions and therefore led to their conversion experience, during which Umayyad propaganda was exposed and the defectors saw the 'truth'.

Another possibility presented by the depictions in some accounts is that the defectors actually believed in the Umayyad propaganda wholeheartedly but were not willing to go so far as to kill Ḥusayn. And, as the Umayyad rhetoric never called for shedding Ḥusayn's blood until the heat of the battle itself, these soldiers may have been fully loyal to the Umayyad army up to that point, aiming only to pressure Ḥusayn into submission. According to this view, on the day of the battle of Karbalā' these defectors may have become aware, for the first time since their enlistment in the army against Ḥusayn, that it was not merely Ḥusayn's oath of allegiance that was sought, but his death. According to this portrayal of the events, it was this realization that made the defectors suddenly aware of the shifting Umayyad propaganda campaign, and led them to the decision to leave the Umayyad army and join Ḥusayn's camp.

Ibn al-Zubayr's *Tasmiyat man qutila ma'a al-Ḥusayn*, the earliest of the sources, only mentions two defectors, [66] but adds that a man who left Kūfa to join Husayn came on the day of 'Āshūrā' only to find Ḥusayn's camp besieged, whereupon he pretended to

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[66] Ibn al-Zubayr, 154 (← Z). As we shall see later, the precise numbers of defectors varies in later sources. In addition, since this source lists only those who died with Ḥusayn, the number of people who defected but did not die with Ḥusayn at Karbalā' is actually more substantial.

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join the Umayyad army, but then began killing the Umayyad troops on all sides until they overcame him and killed him.[67] There are also a number of references in other sources to people joining Ḥusayn's camp for various reasons, and under a variety of other circumstances. One of the defectors depicted was to a traveling Bedouin of the Asad tribe, who, upon passing by the scene of the battle, asked one of the soldiers what the commotion was all about. When he was informed that it was an army besieging the camp of Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, the Asadī is portrayed as immediately joining the camp of Ḥusayn and fighting alongside them.[68] In another depiction, along the way during his journey to 'Irāq, Ḥusayn met one Kūfan who had left Kūfa in order to avoid a confrontation with Ḥusayn. After a brief conversation the Kūfan decided to join Ḥusayn's camp and died with him at Karbalā'.[69] There is also an account of an elderly man joining Ḥusayn from Basra, along with two of his sons, when he heard that the Umayyads were gathering troops to attack Ḥusayn.[70] Although it is not impossible that the phenomenon of such defections actually occurred, these seem to be convenient authorial constructions. Furthermore, although it

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[67] Ibn al-Zubayr, 156 (← Z).

[68] Ibn Sa'd, 50 (← 'Alī b. Muḥammad ← 'Āmir b. Abī Muḥammad ← al-Ḥaytham b. Mūsā ← al-'Urbān b. Ḥaytham); Balādhurī, 172 (n.i) includes a similar scenario, but with four individuals joining Ḥusayn from Kūfa.

[69] Balādhurī, 175 (n.i.). This reference is slightly similar to that of Zuhayr b. al-Qayn al-Bajalī, which we have mentioned previously, but the account is of a different person altogether.

[70] al-Kāmil, 21 (n.i.). Balādhurī, 172-3 (n.i) includes a similar story of a man who saw the gathering troops, met Husayn and told him, but did not join Ḥusayn. Perhaps the account in al-Kāmil is a heroicized exaggeration of this earlier account.

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is not clear why such defectors would have chosen to defect, these examples, coupled with numerous other examples of the phenomenon lead one to believe that accounts of defections may have actually been fabricated, and serve the literary purpose of portraying a protagonist suddenly reaching enlightenment and consciously choosing to sacrifice himself as a martyr for the 'truth'.

One such instance is the account of a group of people who attempted to defect to Ḥusayn's camp the night before the battle of Karbalā'. Apparently, when Ḥusayn's companion Ḥabīb b. al-Maẓāhir addressed a number of his own tribe who were in the besieging army, he discredited the Umayyad polemic against Ḥusayn and reinforced the piety and genealogy conscious aura of Ḥusayn. This apparently resulted in the attempted defection of nearly a hundred of his fellow tribesmen, but they were then attacked by the loyal majority of the army and prevented from crossing over into Ḥusayn's camp. These defectors, fearing retribution in the morning from 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, supposedly slipped away in the middle of the night and ended up not participating in the battle.[71] Another group of people is portrayed as having defected during the actual battle, when, prior to the most intense fighting, Ḥusayn offered to appease the Umayyads. Although sources vary on the specifics of just what it was that Ḥusayn offered, most indicate that he made three offers, some combination of some of the three, or just one of them. Among

[71] Balādhurī, 180 (n.i.) indicates that one man defected; Khwārazmī, 243 (← Ibn A'tham) mentions ninety people; Ibn Ṭāwūs, 40 (n.i) mentions thirty-two; Majlisī, 44:387 (← Muḥammad b. Abī Ṭālib) mentions ninety, as Khwārazmī does.

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these offers supposedly made to the Umayyad army at Karbalā' were: (a) to return to the Ḥijāz and denounce the Kūfans' claims to his leadership, (b) to relocate to Byzantium, India, or some other distant area on the fringes of Islamdom, or (c) to go directly to Damascus and meet with Yazīd himself to settle the matter. Again, although not impossible, it seems unlikely that Ḥusayn would have offered the first two choices. Nevertheless, like the defections, these depictions seem to serve anti-Umayyad historiographical purposes by portraying Husayn as aiming for a peaceful solution, while simultaneously demonizing the Umayyad army by portraying it as unnecessarily bloodthirsty.

When the Umayyad generals refused Ḥusayn's offer(s) and indicated that they would fight him to the death, a number of the soldiers in the army are depicted as having realized that the battle for which they enlisted was intended neither to enforce Ḥusayn's oath of allegiance, nor to preserve Yazīd's caliphate and thereby the unity of the *umma*. It was after the refusal of Ḥusayn's offer(s) of a peaceful solution to the conflict that these defectors are portrayed as having realized that the aim of their superiors was literally to *eliminate* Ḥusayn as the greatest single threat at the time to a continued Umayyad dynastic succession of caliphs. These defectors[72] are depicted as having been completely willing to force Ḥusayn to submit to Umayyad rule, but in no way willing to shed his

[72] Balādhurī, 198 (n.i.) indicates only one defection after the refusal of Ḥusayn's offers; Siyar a'lām, 311 (← Abū Ma'shar) only30; Tārīkh al-Islam, 5:14 (← Abū Ma'shar al-Najīh) also 30.

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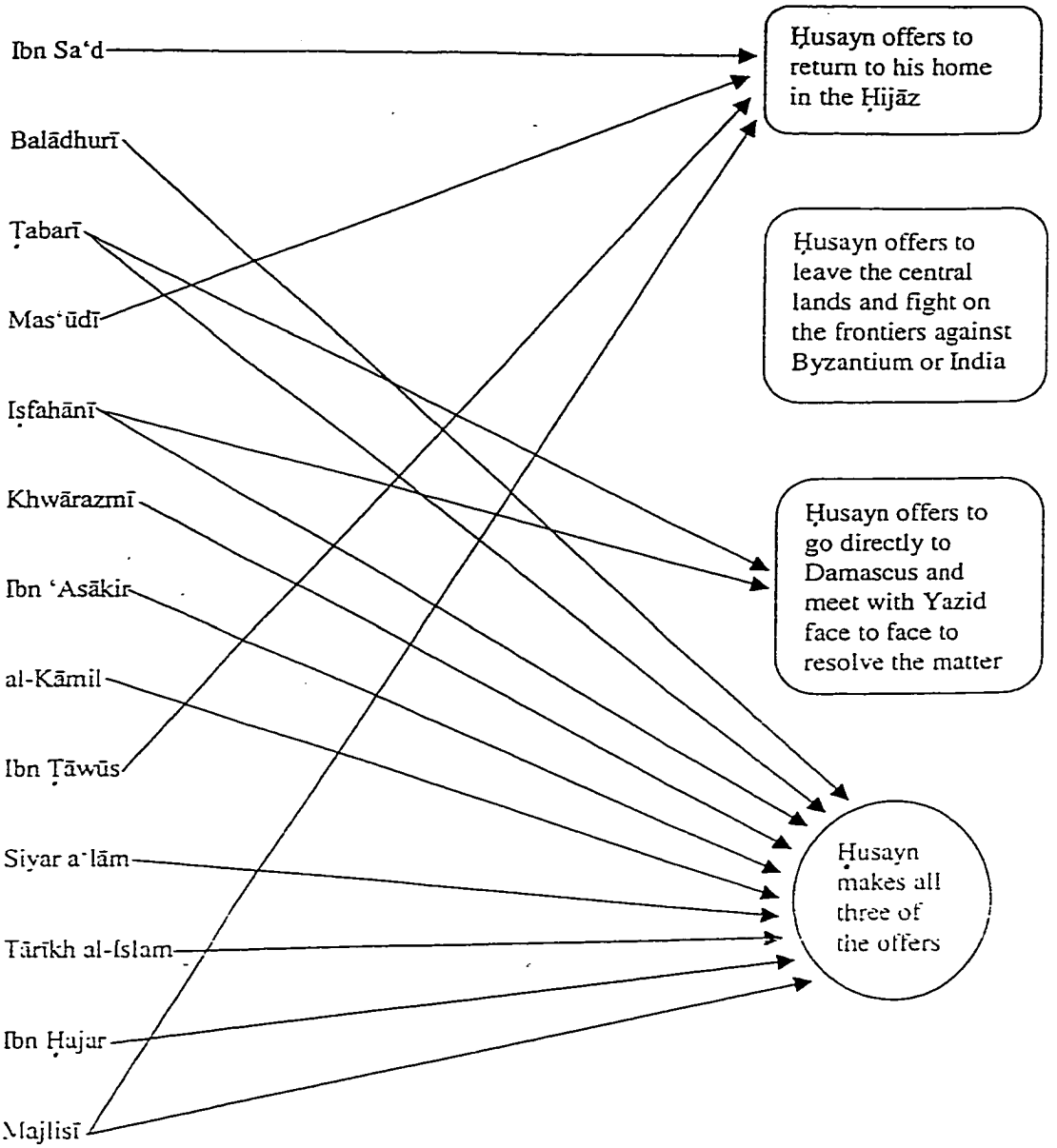

Fig. 6. Ḥusayn's offers: three, two or one?*

* Note: some sources include more than one account, or indicate multiple possibilities.

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blood, and therefore defected. Balādhurī mentions only one such defection, while later sources such as Ibn al-Athīr mention as many as thirty defectors. Apparently, Ibn al-Athīr found the account of one such defector an embarrassingly small number for the pious grandson of the Prophet, and increased the number of defectors to a more honorable thirty. Indeed, the fact that Balādhurī, who in so many other instances in the narrative is quite keen to narrate as much anti-Umayyad sentiment as possible, is in this instance willing to mention such an embarrassingly small number, may itself be indicative of accuracy and lack of bias in this instance. If he had fabricated the account, he could have fabricated a much more honorable number of Umayyad defectors, as in Ibn al-Athīr's later account. Why he did not is itself an interesting question.

Nevertheless, aside from all the previous examples of this phenomenon, the most dramatic of all examples of defection is that of Ḥurr b. Yazīd al-Riyāḥī, the army general who first confronted Ḥusayn on the outskirts of Kūfa, and kept Ḥusayn's camp surrounded until the arrival of thousands of reinforcements. On the day of 'Āshūrā', when it became evident that the commanding general had no intention of letting Husayn escape alive, Ḥurr himself is portrayed as having defected. The depictions of his defection are among the most significant in terms of this thesis. As a high-level commander who participated in the battle under the assumption that its aim was to pressure Ḥusayn into submission, the accounts of his realization that the aim had transformed into the elimination of Ḥusayn and the accounts of his subsequent defection

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indicate explicitly what other portions of the narratives only hint at. Here, the accounts describe Ḥurr as approaching 'Umar b. Sa'd, the commander in chief, as the army made preparations for the attack and asking, "are you really going to kill this man [Ḥusayn]?"[73] After coming to the realization that this was not simply a military maneuver designed to threaten Ḥusayn into giving allegiance, Hurr defected to Ḥusayn's camp and fought and eventually died alongside Ḥusayn and his followers.[74] Being that this is such an integral account, a number of sources dramatize the essential aspects of the account as presented in the earliest sources and embellish it slightly. For example, Khwārazmī's work shows Ḥurr as defecting with two of his own *ghulāms*, and being the first to die for Ḥusayn in the battle, dramatically parallel to his being the first to confront Ḥusayn militarily prior to his defection from the Umayyad army.[75] Balādhurī and Ṭabarī also add that Ḥurr defected after the Umayyad refusal of Ḥusayn's three offers, indicating that, "if Turks or Daylams made the same offers, they would not have been refused."[76] Nevertheless, later

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[73] *A 'anta muqātilu hādhā al-rajul*?" Ibn Sa'd, 72 (← IS).

[74] Balādhurī, 189 (n.i.); Dīnawarī, 256 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 392 (← al-Ḥusayn b. Nasr ← Abū Rabī'a ← Abū 'Awāna ← Ḥuṣayn b. 'Abd al-Rahmān, and also a second *isnād* from: ← Muhammad b. 'Ammār al-Rāzī ← Sa'īd b. Sulaymān ← 'Abbād b. al-'Awām ← Ḥuṣayn); Khwārazmī, 2:10 (← Abū Mikhnaf); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 43 (n.i.); Majlisī, 45:11 (← al-Mufīd).

[75] Khwārazmī, 2:10 (← Abū Mikhnaf).

[76] Balādhurī, 225 (← Sa'īd b. Sulaymān ← 'Abbād b. 'Awām ← Ḥuṣayn); Ṭabarī, 392 (← al-Ḥusayn b. Nasr ← Abū Rabī'a ← Abū 'Awāna ← Ḥuṣayn b. 'Abd al-Rahmān, and also a second *isnād* from: ← Muḥammad b. 'Ammār al-Rāzī ← Sa'īd b. Sulaymān ← 'Abbād b. al-'Awām ← Ḥuṣayn, and a third from: ← Ḥuṣayn ← Hilāl b. Yasāf).

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embellishments aside, the essential original account is significant, and portrays how the Umayyad polemic designed to break down Ḥusayn's piety and genealogy consciousness, and the Umayyad propaganda that was used to enlist troops allegedly to force Ḥusayn to give allegiance and uphold unity effected even the highest levels of the military administration. This is depicted as having been so much the case that Ḥurr b. Yazīd al-Riyāḥī, one of the generals who initially volunteered to confront Ḥusayn, is portrayed as having decided to defect the moment he realized that he himself was also a victim of the Umayyad propaganda against Ḥusayn.

The sources differ on the total numbers of such defections. The figures range from Ibn al-Zubayr's two, to Ibn Sa'd, who puts the number at twenty, to Ibn Ṭāwūs, to who puts it at eighty-two.[77] Al-Dhahabī uses two different figures, citing thirty in his *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* but only twenty in his *Tārīkh al-Islam.*[78] Oddly, Majlisī, who in so many other instances in the Karbalā'-related narratives includes highly exaggerated accounts, in this instance puts the figure at a relatively conservative thirty-two.[79] Nevertheless, the actual number of defectors is not as significant as the fact that there are portrayals of any defections at all. What is most significant is that people are depicted as

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[77] Ibn al-Zubayr, 154 (← Z); Ibn Sa'd, 69 (← IS); Balādhurī, 198 (n.i.); and Ibn Ṭāwūs, 40 (n.i.).

[78] Siyar a'lām, 311 (← Abū Ma'shar); Tārīkh al-Islam, 5:13, includes both figures, twenty (← Ibn Sa'd) and thirty (← Abū Ma'shar) .

[79] Majlisī, 44:394 includes accounts indicating the figure ninety, as did Khwārazmī, as well as an account of thirty-two (← Ibn Ṭāwūs).

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having defected from a clearly overwhelming army of thousands and made the obviously suicidal decision to join a small band of seventy-two men and boys for no apparent reason other than to die with Ḥusayn. A careful analysis of all such references available shows that the sources depict these defectors as men who, although initially enlisting to fight Ḥusayn because of their conviction in the Umayyad polemic urging Ḥusayn's submission, when confronted with shedding Ḥusayn's blood and realizing that they had become the victims of a cleverly-designed Umayyad propaganda campaign, decided to sacrifice their lives for Ḥusayn's cause, which they apparently believed to be a just one.

Conclusion

An overview of the various types of examples presented and analyzed in this chapter reveals that, in addition to the verbal rhetoric that was propagated by the Umayyad propaganda campaign against Ḥusayn, a number of other tactics are also portrayed as having been employed in order to insure the success of the campaign. Among these were various tactics which could be considered in one way or another economically related. The most obvious examples of these are the promises of economic rewards and the threats of economic sanctions that are portrayed as having accompanied the developing rhetoric of the propaganda campaign against Ḥusayn, and simultaneously increased in intensity along with it as Ḥusayn drew nearer and nearer to Kūfa. However, in addition to this economic activity necessitated by the potential deficiencies of a purely

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rhetorical propaganda campaign against Ḥusayn, the Umayyads are also shown as having made use of a number of foreign *ghulām* troops, whose sole interest in participation in the battle was purely economic, and who had little or no awareness of the piety and genealogy conscious aura of Ḥusayn. Both of these factors together made such soldiers the perfect candidates for the most heinous of the war crimes committed at the battle of Karbalā', such as the killing of infant children, women, and even the decapitation of Ḥusayn himself. Finally, the portrayals of defectors from the militarily superior thousands-strong Umayyad ranks to join the clearly outnumbered and overwhelmed seventy-two Ḥusaynid loyalists are in themselves quite significant. They serve as depictions of the extent to which the Umayyad anti-Ḥusayn propaganda campaign succeeded in gathering so many troops against Ḥusayn, believing that the ultimate aim of the battle was to pressure Ḥusayn into submission, but not fully aware that the Umayyads' aim had shifted to eliminating Ḥusayn altogether. Thus, from the beginnings of polemic and rhetoric, to accounts of more tangible economic sanctions, bribery, and threats, to the use of foreign *ghulām*s and the defections resulting from the intensification of violence at Karbalā', we can see that the sources manipulate a variety of depictions of the Umayyads' attempts to neutralize the piety/genealogy conscious aura of Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

A DEVELOPMENTAL ANALYSIS OF DEPICTIONS OF THE EVENTS OF KARBALĀ' IN EARLY ISLAMIC HISTORY

VOLUME TWO

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES
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DEPARTMENT OF NEAR EASTERN LANGUAGES AND CIVILIZATIONS

BY

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CHAPTER 5

CHARACTERIZATIONS OF THE MAIN FIGURES IN THE HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

One of the factors that most shapes a particular source's depictions of the Karbalā' narrative is the way in which the narrative's key figures are characterized. The greater the degree of centrality of the figure, the more a particular author's characterization of that figure affects the way the Karbalā' narrative as a whole is depicted, and thus the way in which that narrative is then perceived by the reader. Not only that, but in certain cases, the characterization of figures central to the narratives makes latent authorial biases apparent. This is particularly the case with figures such as Ḥusayn himself and Yazīd, but it is also the case even with other more peripheral characters as well. Often, an author who is more Ḥusayn-biased will shed a light of nobility and sacrifice for justice not only on Ḥusayn, but on all of his followers and supporters as well. Similarly, such sources tend to portray not only Yazīd, but also 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, and Yazīd's other governors as being intentionally evil and malicious. In contrast, pro-Yazīd sources tend to characterize Ḥusayn as being a short-tempered and stubborn brute who selfishly wanted power in his own hands only, disregarding the desire of the majority of the people

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for unity. These sources attempt to remove any blame from Yazīd by placing all such blame on 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād (the Umayyad governor at Kūfa) or even, in some cases, 'Umar b. Sa'd (the commander in chief of the Umayyad forces at Karbalā') or Shimr b. Dhī al-Jawshan (a lesser general in command of the Umayyad cavalry at Karbalā'). This is an integral factor not only in a modern scholarly analysis of depictions, but also because the earlier sources were often concerned with just who killed Ḥusayn. We see in the sources an apparent 'trickle down' phenomenon whereby each superior is depicted as having attempted to save face by placing the blame for Ḥusayn's death on some lower-ranking official, in response to which he, in turn, diverted the blame to someone even lower in rank. Such characterization in the sources is a factor that helps to distinguish the biases of one source from another

The following chapter will examine the classical sources' depictions of the personal characters of the central figures in the Karbalā' narratives and also examine the often polarized versions of a single figure's characterization. For example, as noted above, Ḥusayn is sometimes characterized as violent and short-tempered, whereas other sources portray him as relatively meek. Ḥusayn's companions, also, are characterized in some sources as cowardly, while in others they are portrayed as being nearly as brave as Ḥusayn himself. As for the Umayyads, Yazīd is sometimes portrayed as having aimed to kill Ḥusayn even before Ḥusayn's movement, and other sources portray Yazīd as an innocent victim of circumstance, displeased with Ḥusayn's death. 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's

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characterizations also alternate between extremes, as do those of 'Umar b. Sa'd, and, depending on precisely whom the author attempts to blame for the killing of Ḥusayn, Shimr b. Dhī al-Jawshan is sometimes demonized, and other times practically ignored altogether. In addition, analysis of a number of incidental Umayyad figures not present at Karbalā' may serve as a test of the sources' consistency (or lack thereof) in characterizations of the Umayyads in general, and may indicate whether potential source biases are anti-Umayyad or merely anti-Yazīd. Finally, textual source-by-source study of these characterizations in this chapter will pave the way for the next chapter's comprehensive *isnād* analysis that will reveal the connections between tradents and the various milieus out of which a particular set of characterizations prevailed, and which will form the basis of the conclusions of this thesis.

Ḥusayn: Lion or Lamb?

Perhaps the most central of all the figures involved in the Karbalā' narratives is Ḥusayn b. 'Alī himself. Even more so than Yazīd or anyone in the Umayyad administration, the way in which Ḥusayn is characterized in the sources is most indicative of the author's viewpoint on the events of the battle of Karbalā'. Many of the events in the narratives that make up Ḥusayn's character occur even prior to the battle itself, during his correspondences and personal dealings with people after the death of his brother Ḥasan, as well as those that occurred after the death of Mu'āwiya, and during his journey

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to 'Irāq. Among these traits that form Ḥusayn's character in the sources are his violent behavior (or, in some sources, the lack thereof), his bravery in resisting the Umayyads both on and off the battlefield, the ways in which he dealt with spontaneous confrontations with Umayyad authorities even prior to the battle, as well as his relations with his followers who went to Karbalā' with him and fought alongside him.

Many of the earlier sources tend to characterize Ḥusayn as a violent personality. This usually appears in depictions of his reaction to the treaty made by his brother Ḥasan, which ended the official state of war between the Umayyads and their followers on the one hand and the 'Alids and their supporters on the other. The sources that depict Ḥusayn as rash, hot-tempered, and foul-mouthed often do so while contrasting his character to Ḥasan's apparent rationality, peacefulness, and sensitivity to the Muslim community's need for unity. Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt* is an early source that clearly adopts this point of view. [1] Other sources also depict Ḥusayn as violent in his reaction to the situation, but rather than characterizing Husayn and his reaction to Yazīd's caliphate as *unnecessarily* violent, his reaction is portrayed as justified. Apparently beginning with Khwārazmī's *maqtal*, [2] some sources began to take this view of the events of Karbalā', glorifying

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[1] Ibn Sa'd, 33 (← Ismā'īl b. Ibrāhīm al-Asadī ← Ibn 'Awn ← 'Umayr b. Isḥāq, and a condensed account from another *isnād*: ← 'Affān b. Muslim ← Ḥammād b. Salama ← 'Atā' b. Sā'ib). Note that it is possible that this may be rooted in the rivalry of Ḥasanī vs. Ḥusaynī descendants for the position of the *imām*. For example, it would certainly have been advantageous to the Idrīsids of North Africa, who were descendants of the Prophet from the Ḥasanī lineage.

[2] Khwārazmī, 182-4 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham).

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Ḥusayn's harshness as well deserved by the corrupt and un-Islamic Umayyads. In a sense, such depictions maintain the image of a short-tempered and foul-mouthed Ḥusayn, but shift its purpose in order to glorify him as a historical martyr figure. Some scenes of Khwārazmī's narrative even make it difficult to believe that such a depiction could possibly befit a 'holy' man. For example, when Marwān and Walīd called on Ḥusayn to give his oath of allegiance to Yazīd, some sources show Husayn as not only refusing, but doing so in a manner that makes him appear almost fanatical. With much screaming and hollering, the Ḥusayn in these depictions is portrayed as having ripped the turban off of Walīd's (and sometimes Marwān's) head, wrapped it around his throat, and nearly strangled him while hurling insults towards Yazīd specifically and the Umayyads in general.[3] Also, in one instance early in the narrative Marwān b. al-Ḥakam reportedly met Ḥusayn in the streets of Madīna and urged him to give his oath of allegiance to Yazīd, whereupon Ḥusayn cursed Marwān and his father referring to sperm and genitalia in a manner that seems shockingly inappropriate for a supposedly pious figure.[4] There are also a number of other instances when Ḥusayn is portrayed as nearly mad, such as when

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[3] Ibn Sa'd, 55 (← IS); Khwārazmī, 183 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); Ibn 'Asākir, 207 (← IA-IS); Siyar a'lām, 295 (← SA-IS); Majlisī, 44:206-7 (← Ibn Shahrāshūb and al-Ṭabarsī ← Muḥammad b. al-Sā'ib), 191 (← Ibn Shahrāshūb).

[4] "You are the one cursed by the Prophet of God while you were still a sperm in your father's loins," Khwārazmī, 185 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham). Noth also notes the classical sources' use of Marwān b. Hakam as a 'classic scapegoat', often blamed for the killing of a companion of the Prophet, see: Albrecht Noth, *The Early Islamic Historical Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1994), 117.

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he was intercepted by Ḥurr b. Yazīd al-Riyāḥī and his army,[5] and one instance when someone questioned why he insisted on stirring up trouble.[6] In both instances, Ḥusayn's responses in reaction are portrayed as having been harsh, and, compared to other sources' depictions of the same situations, nearly fanatical. *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, in particular, characterizes Ḥusayn quite negatively. It is the only one of the sources that so blatantly portrays Ḥusayn as being not only rash and short-tempered, but also arrogant, self-centered, and unconcerned with the needs of the community.

On the completely opposite end of the spectrum are sources that characterize Ḥusayn as a humble, pious Muslim who was unnecessarily wronged by Yazīd and his Umayyad loyalists. In these sources, the same previously mentioned scenario of Ḥusayn's meeting with Marwān and Walīd is depicted very differently. Ḥusayn is no longer portrayed as a madman, ranting and raving at Marwān and Walīd, then ripping off their turbans and nearly strangling them, but quiet, calm, and polite.[7] In sum, the way in which Ḥusayn is characterized in any given source seems to reflect more the author's own personal viewpoints with respect to the Karbalā' narratives than the historical realities of

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[5] Khwārazmī, 232 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham).

[6] Ibn Sa'd, 58 (← Jābir b. 'Abdullāh); Ibn 'Asākir, 208 (← IA-IS).

[7] Al-Kāmil, 15 (n.i.); Tārīkh al-Islam, 4:159 (← Juwayra b. Asmā' ← our *shaykhs* in Madīna); Majlisī, 44:322 (← al-Mufīd in 'al-Irshād' ← al-Kalbī and al-Madā'inī and others).

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Ḥusayn's character, and the pro-Ḥusayn accounts described above clearly serve as exercises in pious legitimation.

Similarly, depictions of Ḥusayn's bravery also fall into this category, both in accounts of events before the battle of Karbalā', and during the battle itself. One of the most recurring accounts in the sources relates an incident before the death of Mu'āwiya when he and his son Yazīd were riding a camel circumambulating the *ka'ba* in Mecca. Ḥusayn allegedly approached them, grabbed Mu'āwiya's camel by the nose and forced it to sit, and then conferred with Mu'āwiya for some time before going about his business. But, after Ḥusayn left, Mu'āwiya's son Yazīd reportedly commented on Ḥusayn's nerve.[8] There are also numerous references to Ḥusayn's extraordinary bravery on the battlefield, and accounts of his incredible swordsmanship, such that he allegedly killed nearly two thousand Umayyad soldiers before falling himself. [9] These are clearly later reports, and seem to fit quite well Noth's description of the 'thousandman' (*hizārmard*) topos.[10]

References to Ḥusayn as a "lion" also appear in other contexts. The majority of these appear in the narrative chronology when Ḥusayn's brother Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib died. The Kūfans came to Ḥusayn giving him their oath of allegiance and

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[8] Ibn Sa'd, 55 (← IS); Siyar a'lām, 295 (← SA-IS); Tārīkh al-Islam, 5:6 (← Ibn Sa'd).

[9] Ṭabarī, 447-8 (← Sulaymān b. Abī Rāshid ← Ḥamīd b. Muslim); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 50 (n.i.) indicates that 30,000 ran from Ḥusayn when he attacked; Khwārazmī, 2:33 (← Abū Mikhnaf); Tārīkh al-Islam, 5:14 (n.i.), Majlisī, 44:191, Majlisī 45:50 (← Ibn Ṭāwūs).

[10] Noth, 169-70.

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Mu'āwiya was informed of the possibility that Ḥusayn would attempt to seize the caliphate. Mu'āwiya is then said to have written to Ḥusayn warning him to keep the peace that was agreed upon, and Ḥusayn responded with a scathing letter to Mu'āwiya.[11] Upon receiving the letter Mu'āwiya was shocked that Ḥusayn would dare to address him so boldly, and allegedly stated, "Ḥusayn is a lion!"[12] Although his advisors and his son Yazīd all suggested that Ḥusayn be punished for so disrespecting the caliph, Mu'āwiya ordered that Ḥusayn be left unharmed. Ibn Sa'd and Ibn 'Āsākir also provide an account of Walīd calling Ḥusayn a lion after Husayn nearly strangled him when he was called to Walīd's home to give his oath of allegiance. [13] Clearly, descriptions of Ḥusayn as a lion appear at various points throughout the Karbalā' narrative, and it is a depiction which authors insert in the mouths of various characters in the narrative. Whether or not such statements were actually made is not of much significance for the purposes of this study. It is the fact that certain sources include such accounts and others do not that is much more significant and which speaks much to the discrepancy in characterizations of Ḥusayn in various sources.

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[11] The accounts in some sources, such as Balādhurī's, transmit a very harsh letter, while other accounts, such as in Dīnawarī's make Ḥusayn's response appear not as harsh.

[12] Ibn Sa'd, 54 (← IS); Balādhurī, 153 (n.i.); Dīnawarī, 224-5 (n.i.); Ibn 'Asākir, 206 (← IA-IS); Siyar a'lām, 294 (← SA-IS); Tārīkh al-Islam, 5:6 (← Ibn Sa'd).

[13] Ibn Sa'd, 55 (← IS); Ibn 'Asākir, 207 (← IA-IS).

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Another feature that characterizes Ḥusayn and his bravery in the sources is the manner in which he supposedly dealt with the Umayyads during his departure from Mecca. Hearing that Ḥusayn was planning to leave Mecca for ʿIrāq, ʿAmr b. Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀs ordered his troops to arrest Ḥusayn and prevent him from going to Kūfa to lead the Kūfans in their rejection of Yazīd. When the Umayyad *shurṭa* guards obstructed Ḥusayn's caravan, preventing Ḥusayn and his followers from leaving Mecca, the first physical confrontation between Ḥusayn's people and Umayyad forces occurred. Ḥusayn ordered his caravan to continue their march and push through the blockade. Although no swords were drawn, the cavalrymen on each side participated in a fight with lashes and whips,[14] until finally Ḥusayn's men penetrated through the blockade and the Umayyads retreated to Mecca. Ḥusayn's character in this instance is thus depicted as being stubbornly determined to achieve his goal, regardless of any obstacles, and fearless in the face of Umayyad resistance.

This type of characterization of Ḥusayn as having a noble mission and the bravery to carry it out also appears in the numerous references of Ḥusayn's addresses to the members of his camp. On several occasions, Ḥusayn is depicted as having urged those who were traveling along with him towards Kūfa to leave him, indicating that his journey will surely end in death. Certainly no one with the intention of gathering up an army for

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[14] Balādhurī, 164 (n.i.); Dīnawarī, 244 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 385 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Ḥārith b. Kaʿb al-Wālibī ← ʿUqba b. Simʿān); Khwārazmī, 220 (← Aḥmad b. Aʿtham); al-Kāmil, 39 (n.i.); Majlisī, 44:365 (← al-Mufīd).

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victory in war would ever encourage such defection. But, in these instances Ḥusayn is portrayed as having consciously and overtly released his followers from their oath of allegiance to him, and encouraged them to save their own lives.[15] Most sources depict this as occurring at a point along the journey when Ḥusayn received the news of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's murder of Ḥusayn's first messenger to Kūfa, Muslim b. 'Aqīl and his Kūfan host, Hāni' b. 'Urwa.

There are also a number of references that characterize Ḥusayn as upholding high moral values, and being unwilling to sacrifice those values for anything. One such example is that when people came to Ḥusayn while he was in Mecca, numerous figures came to him and attempted to convince him not to go to Kūfa. To these requests Ḥusayn is portrayed as having replied that he honored and respected the sanctity of the Meccan *ḥaram* (sanctuary) and that of the *ka'ba*, and did not want his blood to be shed there.[16] In

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[15] Ibn Sa'd, 71 (← IS); Balādhurī, 169 (n.i.); Ya'qūbī, 244 (← 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn); Ṭabarī, 398 (← Hishām ← Abū Bakr b. 'Ayyāsh), 419 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← 'Abdullāh b. 'Āsim al-Fā'ishī ← al-Ḍahhāk b. 'Abdullāh al-Mishraqī); Iṣfahānī, 113 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jundub ← 'Utba b. Sim'ān al-Kalbī), a manipulated rescention of an account in Ṭabarī, 307; Khwārazmī, 229 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); al-Kāmil, 43 (n.i.); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 38 (n.i.); Siyar a'lām, 300 (← SA-IS); Majlisī, 44: 316 (← al-Ṣadūq ← Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Ḥusayn ← 'Abdullāh b. Manṣūr ← Bahja d. al-Ḥārith b. 'Abdullāh al-Taghlabī ← Ṣafīya d. Yūnus b. Abī Isḥāq ← Marīsa d. Mūsā b. Yūnus b. Abī Isḥāq ← Ibrāhīm b. 'Ubaydullāh b. Mūsā b. Yūnūs b. Abī Isḥāq al-Subay'ī ← Ḥasan b. 'Uthmān b. Ziyād al-Tustarī ← Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Baghdādī), 374 (← al-Mufīd), 45:89 (← al-Rāwandī).

[16] Ṭabarī, 385 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Abū Sa'īd 'Uqays); Khwārazmī, 218 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); Ibn 'Asākir, 201 (← Abū Muḥammad Aḥmad b. 'Abdullāh ← Abū al-Ghanā'im b. Abī 'Uthmān ← 'Abdullāh b. 'Ubaydullāh b. Yaḥyā ← Abū 'Abdullāh al-Muḥāmalī ← Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Abī Madh'ūr ← Sufyān b. 'Uyayna ← Ibrāhīm b. Maysara ← Ṭāwūs ← Ibn 'Abbās), 211 (← IA-IS); Siyar a'lām, 292 (← Sufyān b.

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addition, there are references to Ḥusayn's action on the day of the battle itself, when some members of the army attempted to instigate Ḥusayn by hurling insults against him. Zuhayr b. al-Qayn asked Ḥusayn for permission to shoot the speaker with a few arrows, but Ḥusayn is depicted as having prevented him, saying that he did not want to initiate the physical confrontation.[17]

However, in contrast to these depictions characterizing Ḥusayn as brave in the face of Mu'āwiya and Umayyad troops, as well as his nobility in choosing to continue with his opposition of the Umayyad regime with or without his followers, there are also numerous references in the sources that appear to characterize Ḥusayn as ready and willing to give up his noble cause for fear of his life. These references appear at a point in the narrative timeline near the end of Ḥusayn's journey, just before he reached the outskirts of Kūfa. When he reached the blockade set up to prevent people from entering or leaving Kūfa, Ḥusayn is shown as no longer being comfortable with the idea of sacrificing his life in vain. According to some accounts, after he reached the blockade

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'Uyayna ← Ibrāhīm b. Maysara ← Ṭāwūs ← Ibn 'Abbās), 293 (← Ibn Mubārak ← Bishr b. Ghālib ← Ibn al-Zubayr); Majlisī, 44:185 (← Ibn Sharāshūb ← Kitāb al-Ibāna ← Bishr b. 'Āṣim ← Ibn al-Zubayr), 45:85 (← Ibn Qawlawayh ← his father, and Ibn al-Walīd both ← Sa'd ← Muḥammad b. Abī al-Sahbān ← Ibn Abī Najrān ← 'Āṣim b. Ḥamīd ← Faḍīl al-Rassān ← Abū Sa'īd 'Uqaysā). Note that most of these isnāds go back to Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn Zubayr, and Abū Sa'īd 'Uqays (to 'Alī b. Ḥusayn). Whether or not these accounts reflect historical reality, the fact that their chains of transmission follow either 'Alid or Kufan lines indicates that such parties were clearly interested in portraying a noble and honorable Husayn.

[17] Ṭabarī, 409 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jundub ← 'Uqba b. Sim'ān); al-Kāmil, 52 (n.i.).

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Ḥusayn considered returning to the Hijāz,[18] while in others he considered the possibility of going directly to confront Yazīd himself.[19] Especially in light of the fact that Ḥusayn is depicted as having considered these options even before being besieged and offering to compromise with the army, such accounts portray a characterization of Ḥusayn that is in stark contrast to that of the noble figure ready to sacrifice his life for the sake of upholding high ideals.

Another account that recurs in the Karbalā' related sources is that of Ḥusayn's confiscation, on the outskirts of Mecca, of a caravan laden with gifts to Yazīd from his governor at Yaman.[20] This is particularly noteworthy because it helps contribute to the characterization of Ḥusayn on more than one level. Just as with some of the previous examples, Ḥusayn's confiscation of Yazīd's caravan is a case where the same incident is depicted differently, according to the biases of individual sources. This example in particular lends itself rather well to individual interpretation. Ḥusayn's actions could be

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[18] Ibn Sa'd, 69 (← IS); Dīnawarī, 250 (n.i); Ṭabarī, 389 (← Zakarīyā b. Yaḥyā al-Darīr ← Aḥmad b. Janāb al-Maṣṣīsī ← Khālid b. Yazīd b. 'Abdullāh al-Qasrī ← 'Ammār al-Duhnī← Abū Ja'far); Iṣfahānī, 111 (← Abū Mikhnaf); Siyar a'lām, 308 (← Khālid b. 'Abdullāh ← al-Jarīrī).

[19] Balādhurī, 173 (← Sa'dawīya← 'Abbād b. al-'Awām ← Ḥadīn (sic.)← Hilāl b. Isāf), 225 (← Sa'īd b. Sulaymān ← 'Abbād b. al-'Awām ← Ḥusayn); Ṭabarī, 392 (← Ḥusayn ← Hilāl b. Yasāf), 413 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jundub ← 'Uqba b. Sum'ān); Iṣfahānī, 114 (← Iṣfahānī combined *isnād*, henceforth, "ISF", see fig. 8). Note, in Balādhurī and Iṣfahānī, Husayn is on the offensive.

[20] Balādhurī, 164 (n.i.); Dīnawarī, 245 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 385 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Ḥārith b. Ka'b al-Wālibī ← 'Uqba b. Sim'ān); Khwārazmī, 220 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); al-Kāmil, 40 (n.i.); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 29 (← al-Mufīd ← Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq); Majlisī, 44:366 (← al-Mufīd).

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Pericope	IZB	ISA	BAL	DIN	YAQ	DUL	TAB	KUL	MAS	ISF	TBR	QNU	BAG	KHW	IAS	UGH	KAM	ITA	SIY	TIS	IHJ	MAU
Husayn as lion (scathing letter to Mu'awiya)		X	X	X											X				X	X		
Husayn as lion (strangles Walid)		X													X							
Husayn as lion (fights through blockade)			X	X			X							X			X					X
Husayn tells follwers to desert him		X	X		X		X			X							X	X	X	X		X
Husayn wants no blood spilled in Mecca		X					X							X	X							
In Iraq, offers to return to Medina		X		X			X			X									X	X		
In Iraq, offers to go to Yazid at Damascus			X				X			X												

Fig. 7. Pericopes of Husayn.

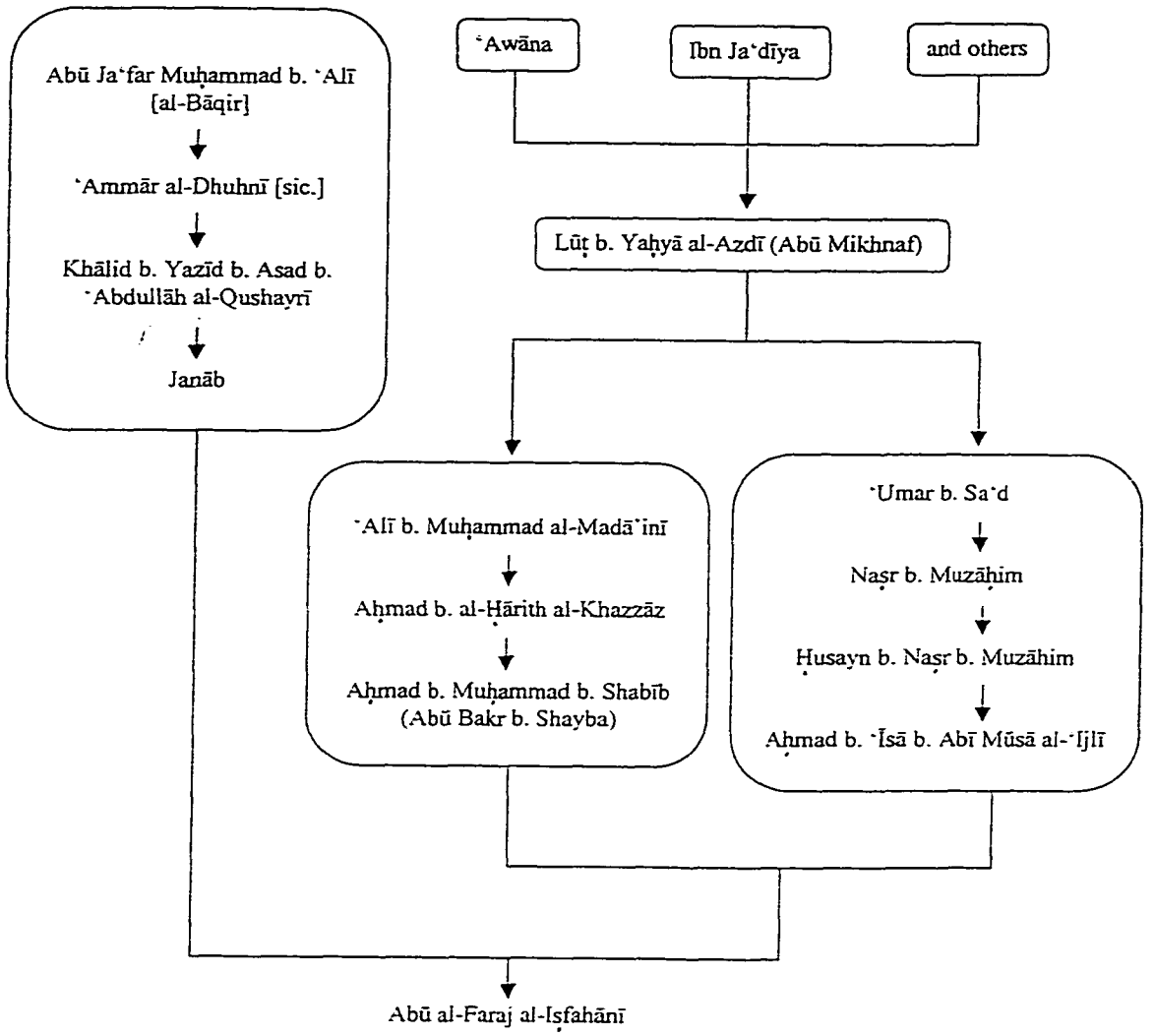

Fig. 8. Iṣfahānī combined *isnād* ("ISF"), see footnote 19 and pp. 198-9.

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seen as yet another example of his nobility and bravery in challenging the Umayyad establishment, or it could be seen as practically a declaration of war by a hot-headed rebel. In that sense it is quite similar to some of the previous examples. Unlike other examples, however, Ḥusayn's capture of Yazīd's Yamanī caravan also has other connotations absent from other portions of the narratives. Firstly, the sources do not depict Ḥusayn as having confiscated the goods for his own personal profit. Rather, he is portrayed as having distributed the wealth among those who were hired for the caravan, paying them their wages so that there was no financial loss on their part. Balādhurī also indicates that Ḥusayn used part of the proceeds to pay to his supporters who went to Karbalā' with him.[21] Moreover, the sources also indicate that Ḥusayn ordered the digging of a trench around their encampment at Karbalā' so that they may face the attacking army from only one direction.[22] Most interesting about these examples, however, is the striking similarity between Ḥusayn's confiscation of Yazīd's caravan and his digging a trench in preparation for the battle and the Prophet's confiscation of a Qurayshī Meccan caravan and the Battle of the Trench, [23] both of which occurred no more than sixty short

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[21] Balādhurī, 164 (n.i.).

[22] Balādhurī, 187 (n.i.); Dīnawarī, 256 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 423 (Abū Mikhnaf ← 'Abdullāh b. 'Āṣim ← al-Ẓahhāk al-Mishraqī); Khwārazmī, 248 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); al-Kāmil, 59 (n.i.), but he mentions that it was a 'depression', and not a trench, *per se*; Majlisī, 45:5 (← al-Mufīd ← Ẓahhak b. 'Abdullāh).

[23] See the accounts of 'Abdullāh b. Jahsh, the Prophet at Badr, and Zayd b. Ḥāritha, in the biography of the Prophet: Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, trans, Alfred Guillaume (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1955), 286-9, 364.

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years prior to the battle of Karbalā'. The events are so similar that it seems unreasonable to conclude that the similarity is merely coincidental.[24] Rather, these accounts seem to portray Ḥusayn as deliberately reinforcing the people's piety and genealogy counsciousness by taking actions that harked back to similar actions of the Prophet that may have been still fresh in the minds of the early Muslims. Such accounts appear to portray Ḥusayn's capture of Yazīd's caravan as his way of making the people aware of the parallels between the rivalry between himself and Yazīd, and the rivalry two generations earlier between Ḥusayn's own grandfather, the Prophet, and Yazīd's grandfather, Abū Sufyān.

But Ḥusayn's confiscation of the caravan of gifts is not the only such example found in the Karbalā' related narratives. Depictions of Ḥusayn as doing things that mirrored historical events that were fresh in the collective memory of the Muslim community also appear elsewhere in the narratives. There are also depictions of an instance when, on the day of 'Āshūrā' itself, in the midst of the battle, Ḥusayn called for a *muṣḥaf* (text) of the Qur'ān, and then went before the Umayyad army brandishing the Qur'ān.[25] As with the capture of Yazīd's caravan, this action on the part of Ḥusayn also

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[24] In fact, if any more instances of this robin-hood type of caravan confiscation can be found in the early Islamic sources, it may prove to be yet another *topos* for Noth, as may the trench topos.

[25] Balādhurī, 194 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 423 (←Abū Mikhnaf ← 'Amr b. Murra al- Jamalī ← Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Ḥanfī ← a *ghulām* of 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Abd Rabbih al-Anṣārī); al-Kāmil, 60 (n.i.).

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harks back to a previous Islamic battle. But, rather than recalling his grandfather, Muḥammad, who attacked the caravan of Yazīd's grandfather two generations prior, in this account, by raising the Qur'ān at Karbalā' Ḥusayn is depicted as having attempted to recall the battle of Ṣiffīn, where the forces of his father, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, confronted those of Yazīd's father, Mu'āwiya.[26] That confrontation was well known to the early Muslims as a crisis resolved by one side raising pages of the Qur'ān atop their spears, reminding their attackers that they were all Muslims and should not be killing each other. Both Ḥusayn's capture of Yazīd's caravan and his raising of the Qur'ān before his attackers seem to be depictions of rather deliberate attempts on the part of Ḥusayn not only to reinforce piety and genealogy consciousness in general, but also to establish that the situation that both he and the attacking army were in was not merely a battle over power between Ḥusayn and Yazīd, but a symptom of a much deeper intergenerational conflict between the family of Muhammad through Fāṭima and that of the Umayyads through Abū Sufyān.

This understanding of an intergenerational conflict between the 'Alids and the Umayyads is a key factor in understanding the way in which the later Shī'ī sources characterize Ḥusayn. Kulaynī's *al-Uṣūl al-kāfī* and Majlisī's *Biḥār al-anwār* are the two sources that are exemplary of Shī'ī radicalism in their depictions of the Karbalā' narratives. However, for the time being, we shall focus only on their characterization of

[26] Ṭabarī, 5:47-63.

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Ḥusayn, which, as with other aspects of the narratives, undergo a radical transformation from the depictions of previous sources. In these works Ḥusayn is not only brave and noble, but he is also endowed with characteristics impossible to be found in any normal human being. Some of these are by virtue of his relation to the Prophet through his mother Fāṭima, while others go even beyond that. Kulaynī emphasizes this relationship to the Prophet through Fāṭima in an account of a verbal battle between Ḥusayn and ʻĀ'isha, where he curses ʻĀ'isha with an unprecedentedly scathing series of insults, the likes of which are not found in any earlier sources. ʻĀ'isha is then unable to return insults against the *fawāṭim* (children of Fāṭima).[27] Kulaynī's is also the first work to present a reinterpretation of a number of Qur'ānic verses and attribute their meaning as being in reference to Ḥusayn's battle at Karbalā', [28] in addition to references to the battle as Ḥusayn's *jihād* (struggle), and to his status as a *shahīd* (martyr). [29] A good example of just how radically different the characterizations of Ḥusayn had become by this time is Kulaynī's mention that Ḥusayn did not breastfeed in infancy, but sucked on the Prophet's finger for his nutritional requirements. Majlisī's work, several centuries later, goes even further in its miraculous characterization of Ḥusayn. Not only does it relate Kulaynī's

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[27] Kulaynī, 302-3 (← Sahl ← Muḥammad b. Sulaymān ← Hārūn b. al-Jahm ← Muḥammad b. Muslim ← Abū Ja'far).

[28] Kulaynī, 464 (← Muḥammad b.Yaḥyā ← ʻAlī b. Ismāʻīl ← Muḥammad b. ʻAmr al-Zayyāt ← *rajulin min aṣḥābinā* ← Abū ʻAbdullāh).

[29] Kulaynī, 573-6 (← *ʻiddatin min aṣḥābinā* ← Aḥmad b. Muḥammad ← al-Ḥusayn b. Saʻīd ← Faḍāla b. Ayyūb ← Nuʻaym b. al-Walīd ← Yūnus al-Kannāsī ← Abū ʻAbdullāh).

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account of the baby Ḥusayn sucking on the Prophet's finger instead of his mother's breast, but it also includes a number of references that are surprisingly similar to biblical accounts attributed to Jesus. This source is laden with examples of Ḥusayn's saliva curing the sick, Ḥusayn bringing the dead back from life, and other examples of miraculous abilities such as causing people's dismembered limbs to re-grow, or causing infant children to speak, that serve to characterize Ḥusayn as almost super-human. [30] Also, there are references to Ḥusayn's knowledge as being equal to that of the Prophet, and even more blatant statements equating Ḥusayn himself to the Prophet. [31] All of these indicate a clear Shī'ī radicalization of the characterization of Ḥusayn, and, as we shall see later, in the depictions of the Karbalā' narratives as a whole.

It is clear from the above examples that Ḥusayn, arguably the key figure in the Karbalā' narratives, has inherited in the historical sources a wide array of characterizations. Among these are depictions of a hot-headed, violent Ḥusayn, depictions of Ḥusayn as "a lion," accounts of his bravery and military acumen, and those of his nobility and willingness to sacrifice his own life for the upholding of high principles and ideals. Conversely, for each of the previously mentioned characteristics some sources portray Ḥusayn as possessing the opposite characteristics, namely, being

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[30] Majlisī includes an entire chapter on such miracles (see 44:180-2, 184, 198, 270), including many of which resemble biblical miracles performed by Jesus, such as curing lepers and raising the dead.

[31] Majlisī, 44:221 (← al-Ṭabarsī ← Muḥammad b. Muslim ← Abū 'Abdullāh).

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mild-mannered and polite, avoiding battle and military confrontation at all costs, and more than willing to set aside his principles at the outskirts of Kūfa in order to return home to Madīna alive. Interestingly, *isnād* analysis reveals both of these types of accounts to be traceable back to more or less the same set of tradents. Aside from a rare few instances when Ḥusayn's interactions in Mecca are reported by Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn al-Zubayr (with possible pro-'Abbāsid, and certainly anti-Umayyad biases), *isnād* analysis reveals that the vast majority of the tradents of these reports appear to be Kūfan and anti-Umayyad. This makes the appearance of pro-Ḥusayn accounts such as those mentioned above self-explanatory. However, this simultaneously brings up the question of how seemingly anti-Ḥusayn accounts can be traced back to the same sets of *isnāds.* It seems that whatever shifts in portrayals appearing between the early tradents and later compilers may have been due to either an intermediary tradent's twist during transmission, or, more likely, the hand of the later compiler exaggerating an occasional adjective or modifier here and there. In addition, a number of sources, both Sunnī and Shī'ī include accounts characterizing Ḥusayn as part of an intergenerational conflict between Muḥammad and his descendants through Fāṭima on the one hand, and the Umayyad clan through the family of Abū Sufyān on the other. Finally, representative Shī'ī sources show a clear radicalization of characterizations of Ḥusayn such that he is portrayed as the Shī'ī Muslim equivalent of some Old Testament biblical prophets, as well as re-enacting some of the biblical accounts of Jesus.

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An analysis of these depictions of Ḥusayn indicates that the most radical characterizations of him, those appearing in the works of Kulaynī and Majlisī, are all based on *isnāds* that supposedly trace back to one of the twelver Shī'ī imāms. Whether or not these accounts can actually be traced back to them as sources is questionable, particularly when so many of the *isnāds* contain missing links denoted by vague phrases such as "*'an rajulin min aṣḥābinā*". Such 'evidence' of supposedly continuous and reliable transmission only reinforces the likelihood of fabrication of these types of accounts. When viewed all together, these characterizations of Ḥusayn and other Karbalā'-related figures as presented in this chapter, will allow for a more complete understanding of the development of the depictions of the battle of Karbalā' in early Islamic historical sources.

Analysis of Iṣfahānī's Combined Isnād

In examining the combined *isnād* of Iṣfahānī's Karbalā' narrative we can notice three separate subchains of narrations, two of which have as their source Abū Mikhnaf (d. 180), who in turn has as his sources 'Awāna (unidentifiable), Ibn Ja'dīya (unidentifiable), and a group of "others" not mentioned by name. Although none of these sources of Abū Mikhnaf are identifiable in the classical biographical dictionaries, we can determine from other compilations, such as Ṭabarī's, that the vast majority of Abū Mikhnaf's sources are Kūfans. According to the combined *isnād*, Abū Mikhnaf's information reached Iṣfahānī

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by way of two subchains. Of these two, the first (Aḥmad b. Muḥammd b. Shabīb from Aḥmad b. al-Ḥārith al-Khazzāz from ʻAlī b. Muḥammad al-Madāʼinī) has only one identifiable tradent, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Madāʼinī (d. 225) from Baṣra. From the second of these subchains (ʻUmar b. Saʻd from Nasr b. Muzāḥim from Ḥusayn b. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim from Aḥmad b. ʻĪsā b. Abī Mūsā al-ʻIjlī), ʻUmar b. Saʻd (d. 205) was identified as a Kūfan and Ḥusayn b. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim (d. after 212) was identified as a Kūfan who later moved to Baghdad. Thus, both of these subchains that have Abū Mikhnaf as their source are transmitted by Irāqī tradents, one by a Baṣran chain and the other by a Kūfan one.

But, of the three subchains identified by Iṣfahānī's combined *isnād*, the most interesting is the one that is not based on Abū Mikhnaf's sources. This subchain (Janāb from Khālid b. Yazīd b. Asad b. ʻAbdullāh al-Qushayrī, from ʻAmmār al-Dhuhnī, from Abū Jaʻfar Muḥammad b. ʻAlī [al-Bāqir]) is clearly an ʻAlid and Shīʻī chain. Although Janāb is unidentifiable, Khālid b. Yazīd b. Asad b. ʻAbdullāh al-Qushayrī (d. 148) is identified as a Kūfan. The source of his information, ʻAmmār al-Dhuhnī (d. 133) is identified not only as a Kūfan, but is also specifically stated to have been a Shīʻī. This is not at all surprising, particularly when noting that the source of his information is listed as Abū Jaʻfar Muḥammad b. ʻAlī (d. 114), who was not only a Hāshimī and an ʻAlid, but also the fifth Shīʻī *imām* and the grandson of Ḥusayn himself! Thus, Iṣfahānī's clear pro-

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Ḥusayn and anti-Umayyad bias in the text is easily corroborated by analysis of the *isnād* he provides, in spite of being a combined one.

Ḥusayn's Companions at Karbalā'

These tendencies in the sources' characterizations of the main figures in the Karbalā' narratives are not limited only to Ḥusayn himself. A similar phenomenon is apparent when we examine the sources' characterizations of Ḥusayn's compatriots and supporters. For example, most of the sources depict Muslim b. 'Aqīl, Ḥusayn's first messenger to Kūfa, as organizing a rebellion against 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād. But, in some sources, particularly those prior to Khwārazmī, Muslim b. 'Aqīl is portrayed as having done this as a response to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's capture (and in some sources also murder) of Muslim's host in Kūfa, Hāni' b. 'Urwa. [32] Khwārazmī's *maqtal*, on the other hand, characterizes Muslim in a different light. In Khwārazmī's work Muslim is depicted as having instigated a pre-emptive strike against 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād and is characterized as being, like Ḥusayn, "an angry lion."[33] This is quite a different characterization of Muslim b. 'Aqīl not only when compared to sources prior to

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[32] Ibn Sa'd, 66 (← IS); Balādhurī, 224 (← Sa'īd b. Sulaymān ← 'Abbād b. al-'Awām ← Ḥuṣayn); Dīnawarī, 238 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 391 (← al-Ḥusayn b. Naṣr ← Abū Rabī'a ← Abū 'Awāna ← Ḥuṣayn b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, and a second *isnād* from: ← Muḥammad b. 'Ammār al-Rāzī ← Sa'īd b. Sulaymān ← 'Abbād b. 'Awām ← Ḥuṣayn); Siyar a'lām, 299 (← SA-IS), 307 (← Aḥmad b. Janāb al-Maṣṣīsī ← Khālid b. Yazīd al-Qasrī ← 'Ammār al-Duhnī ← Abū Ja'far al-Bāqir); Tārīkh al-Islam, 4:171 (← Ibn Sa'd).

[33] Khwārazmī, 209 (← Aḥmad b. A 'tham).

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Khwārazmī's, but also when comparing it to characterizations of Muslim b. 'Aqīl earlier in Khwārazmī's own work. Khwārazmī's, as well as a number of sources prior to his, include an account of an incident during Muslim b. 'Aqīl's initial journey from Madīna to Kūfa that depicts him as almost cowardly. In such accounts, after the death of his guides from thirst, and after reaching a small oasis in the Rub' al-Khālī desert, Muslim b. 'Aqīl is said to have sent a message to Ḥusayn explaining his situation and asking to be excused from the assignment given to him by Ḥusayn.[34] Though at first glance it seems odd that Khwārazmī would include such an account, after careful examination it appears that this apparent cowardice may have been included with the intention of providing a contrasting backdrop in front of which Muslim b. 'Aqīl's later bravery could stand out. Furthermore, Muslim b. 'Aqīl's bravery is not so emphasized in any later source, until al-Dhahabī's. [35] In fact, some of the sources fail to mention Muslim b. 'Aqīl's uprising in Kūfa altogether, or simply brush over the details and mention it only in passing. [36]

Also, a very similar scenario appears in the characterizations of Muslim b. 'Aqīl's host in Kūfa, Hāni' b. 'Urwa. The dichotomy of depictions between cowardice and

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[34] Khwārazmī, 196 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham). A similar account appears in Dīnawarī, 230 (n.i.), but that is the only source earlier than Khwārazmī to include such an account. A number of sources after Khwārazmī do mention the incident, such as al-Kāmil, 21 (n.i.) and Majlisī, 44:335 (← al-Mufīd).

[35] Tārīkh al-Islam, 4:171 (← al-Wāqidī and al-Madā'inī).

[36] Ibn Ṭāwūs, 16, 21 (n.i.); Siyar a'lām, 299 (← SA-IS), 307-8 (← Aḥmad b. Janāb al-Massīsī ← Khālid b. Yazīd al-Qasrī ← 'Ammār al-Duhnī ← Abū Ja'far al-Bāqir), Ibn Ḥajar, 78 (← 'Ammār b. Mu'āwīya al-Duhnī ← Abū Ja'far 'Alī b. Muḥammad).

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bravery repeat themselves in the sources in a fashion parallel to the sources' characterizations of Muslim b. 'Aqīl himself. When 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād first arrived at Kūfa and announced that he had come to crush any support for Ḥusayn, Muslim b. 'Aqīl left the house of Mukhtār b. Abī 'Ubayd al-Thaqafī and relocated to the home of Hāni' b. 'Urwa. Some of the sources that portray Hāni' as having been reluctant to accept Muslim b. 'Aqīl into his home in this instance are the same as those which included the account of Muslim b. 'Aqīl requesting excusal from his assignment.[37] Thus, we find a consistency among some sources in portraying cowardice as an element in the characterizations of both figures.[38] Also, as with the case for the characterizations of Muslim b. 'Aqīl, in Khwārazmī's source, Hāni''s bravery takes on a new character when seen against a backdrop of apparent cowardice. In Khwārazmī's work, after Hāni' was imprisoned in the castle by 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, Hāni''s bravery is depicted as such that he even had the nerve to threaten 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād with violence.[39] And, just as with the depictions of Muslim b. 'Aqīl's rebellion, there are several sources that brush over the imprisonment and murder of Hāni' as well, mentioning the event only in passing, if at

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[37] As with the example of Muslim's excusal, the first of these is Dīnawarī's, 233 (n.i.), and similar accounts also appear in Iṣfahānī, 100 (← 'Amr ← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Ma'allī b. Kulayb ← Abū al-Waddāk); al-Kāmil, 25 (n.i.); Ibn Ḥajar, 80 (← 'Ammār b. Mu'āwīya al-Duhnī ← Abū Ja'far 'Alī b. Muḥammad); and Majlisī, 44:344 (← Iṣfahānī).

[38] Hāni''s bravery is portrayed in Ṭabarī and Mas'ūdī without the backdrop of cowardice found in other sources. Ṭabarī, 361 (← 'Umar b. Shabba ← Hārūn b. Muslim ← 'Alī b. Ṣāliḥ ← Īsā b. Yazīd al-Kanānī); Mas'ūdī, 57 (n.i.).

[39] Khwārazmī, 205 (← Ibn A'tham)

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all.[40] Thus, there appears to be a tendency in the sources to characterize both Muslim b. 'Aqīl and his host, Hāni' b. 'Urwa in a similar fashion. Some sources (such as Ṭabarī) tend to make both appear as brave as possible, while others (such as Dīnawarī) depict both as cowardly, while Khwārazmī's appears to manipulate both types of characterizations by using a background of cowardliness to contrast their later bravery when they actually confront the Umayyads.

Another main figure of the Karbalā' narratives whose characterization in different sources is rather interesting to study is Ḥurr b Yazīd al-Riyāḥī,[41] the Kūfan general who first confronted Ḥusayn in order to capture him, but then defected on the day of 'Āshūrā' to fight alongside Ḥusayn and eventually die in his defense. Ḥurr is perhaps the most interesting of the figures of the Karbalā' narratives, and the variety of ways in which he is characterized by different sources is equally interesting. The majority of sources indicate that after confronting Ḥusayn with his army, and after hearing the call for prayer, Ḥurr and his entire army all prayed behind Ḥusayn, thereby investing him with the position of

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[40] Siyar a'lām, 307 (← Aḥmad b. Janāb al-Massīsī ← Khālid b. Yazīd al-Qasrī ← 'Ammār al-Duhnī ← Abū Ja'far al-Bāqir); Ibn Ḥajar, 80 (← 'Ammār b. Mu'āwīya al-Duhnī ← Abū Ja'far 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn).

[41] Interestingly, the only source to refer to him by his father's name is the earliest. Later sources, particularly Shī'ī sources, fail to refer to him as Ḥurr b. Yazīd, perhaps because of the negative connotations that the name Yazīd had apparently taken by that time. The fact that such an early source, and a clearly 'Alid one at that, does mention the name Yazīd may itself be an indication that within the century after the battle of Karbalā', the name had not yet taken on such evil connotations.

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Pericope	IZB	ISA	BAL	DIN	YAQ	DUL	TAB	KUL	MAS	ISF	TBR	QNU	BAG	KHW	IAS	UGH	KAM	ITA	SIY	TIS	IHU	MAJ
Muslim rebels because of capture of Hani'		X	X	X			X											X	X	X		X
Muslim as Angry lion (pre-emtive strike)														X								
Cowardly, asking for excusal				X										X								X
Muslim brushed over in narrative																		X	X	X		
Hani' reluctant to accept Muslim				X						X											X	X
Hani' accepts Muslim immediately							X		X								X		X	X		
Hani' brave in confrontation with Ibn Ziyad														X			X		X	X		X
Hani'/Ibn Ziyad confrontation brished over																						

Fig. 9. Pericopes of Muslim b. 'Aqīl and Hāni' b. 'Urwa.

their *imām* in prayer.[42] However, the factors that make the sources' depictions of Ḥurr differ are his manner of obeying orders while simultaneously respecting Ḥusayn and refraining from doing battle with him. Some sources, such as Mas'ūdī, [43] portray Ḥurr as lenient with Ḥusayn and not as strict in obeying commands, while others portray him as being harsher with Ḥusayn and more concerned with following orders. And, as was the case with Muslim b. 'Aqīl and Hāni' b. 'Urwa, some sources, such as *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, fail to mention Ḥurr altogether. As with the spectrum of characterizations of previously mentioned figures in the Karbalā' narratives, contrasting characterizations are also evident for Ḥurr. However, whereas the polarity of characterizations of previous figures was based on the discrepancy between cowardice and bravery, the contrasting characterizations of Ḥurr do not question this issue at all. Rather, they highlight the degree to which Ḥurr is loyal to the Umayyads and disrespectful of Ḥusayn, with pro-Ḥusayn sources depicting him as increasingly disloyal to the Umayyads, and increasingly respectful of Ḥusayn, even prior to his defection.[44]

Furthermore, in addition to these figures, there are also a number of Ḥusayn's own kin that the sources portray as key figures in the narratives. The sources all portray events

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[42] Balādhurī, 170 (n.i.); Dīnawarī, 249 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 401 (← Hishām ← Laqīṭ ← 'Alī b. al-Ṭa''ān al-Muḥāribī); al-Kāmil, 47 (n.i.); Majlisī, 44:376 (← 'Alī b. al-Ṭa''ān al-Muḥāribī).

[43] Mas'ūdī, 60 (n.i.).

[44] For details on Ḥurr's defection to Ḥusayn's camp, see chapter 4, defections.

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such that, after the followers of Ḥusayn were killed, Ḥusayn's male relatives fought to protect their patriarch. In terms of the development of their characterization in the sources, the two most significant such figures are Ḥusayn's half-brother 'Abbās b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, and Ḥusayn's son 'Alī b. Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. Although there were nearly twenty others among Ḥusayn's *ahl al-bayt* who died protecting him at Karbalā', the sources' characterizations of these two are particularly noteworthy because of their influence on later Shī'ī conceptualizations of Karbalā', and the rituals that simultaneously evolved out of those conceptualizations and then perpetuated them. 'Abbās, who was Ḥusayn's standard-bearer and closest supporter, eventually came to be the symbol of unwavering familial support for Ḥusayn, fighting to the death to protect his half-brother against all odds.[45] 'Alī b. Ḥusayn, on the other hand, did not even participate in the battle, but remained ill and bedridden, narrowly surviving attempts at his life, making him the only adult male to have survived the battle of Karbalā'. The significance of his role was not so much at Karbalā' as it was afterwards. He was deeply involved in defending his father's honor at the courts of both 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād and Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya, when he was marched off with the prisoners and subjected to public verbal abuses.[46] And, even after that, when the prisoners were returned to Madīna, 'Alī b. Ḥusayn became

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[45] As we shall see, this is in contrast to Ḥusayn's half-brother Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya, whom many sources depict as being far from supportive of Ḥusayn.

[46] For details, please refer to Chapter 2, after Karbalā', describing Umayyad rhetoric against Ḥusayn and the attempts of 'Alī b. Ḥusayn and Zaynab d. 'Alī to defend Ḥusayn's honor.

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the next Shī'ī *imām*, and played an important but unassuming role in local Ḥijāzī politics, and in perpetuating what was later to become Shī'īsm as we know it today.

The sources' characterizations of 'Abbās b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib are significant in two respects. The first is an issue of military command, or degree of loyalty at Karbalā', and the second is one of historiographic confusion leading to a development in later Shī'ī rituals. With regard to the first issue, the sources differ on the relationship between 'Abbās and Ḥusayn at a certain point in the Karbalā' narrative. On the evening before the tenth of Muḥarram, orders were given for the army to attack Ḥusayn's camp and eliminate Ḥusayn and his companions. When the troops begin to take their formations and prepare for the attack, Ḥusayn's camp heard the commotion and Ḥusayn asked 'Abbās to go to the army and ask them what was going on. He does so, and a number of soldiers responded that they have been given orders to attack and 'finish' Ḥusayn if he did not comply with the orders of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād. When 'Abbās returned and informed Ḥusayn, Ḥusayn is depicted as having told him to go back and ask them to delay their attack until the morning. While giving this command, Ḥusayn mentioned specifically that the request was so that Ḥusayn and his companions could be afforded the last night of their lives to pray and recite the Qur'ān. Up to this point in the narrative, there is no disagreement in the sources. Sources differ, however, as to precisely what occurred next. Some characterize 'Abbās as having followed his instructions to the letter, while others indicate that he went to the army, but instead of asking for a delay to pray

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and read Qur'ān, he asked for a delay so that Ḥusayn might have more time to think about submitting to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's demands. Although it may seem trivial, this is a very important point in the characterization of Ḥusayn's brother 'Abbās, particularly when considering that later sources attempt to characterize him as being the epitome of obedience and filial loyalty. It seems likely that 'Abbās may have actually taken matters into his own hands at that point, at least to some degree, because most accounts of the incident in the early sources support such a view,[47] whereas only two later Shī'ī works indicate that 'Abbās followed Ḥusayn's instructions exactly as he was told.[48] The fact that even earlier sources that usually narrate accounts sympathetic to the Shī'ī point of view fail to do so in this case seems to indicate that the depiction of 'Abbās's following Ḥusayn's orders precisely are somewhat dubious.

Another important aspect of the sources' characterizations of 'Abbās is one which turned out to have a great influence on the development of later Shī'ī rituals, and 'Abbās's role in later Shī'ī self-definition. There is consistency in the sources' depictions of accounts of the day of 'Āshūrā' indicating that the crying of the thirsty children who had had no access to water for three days emotionally affected 'Abbās such that he decided to fight his way to the river and retrieve water for them. The sources vary in their

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[47] Ibn Sa'd, 70 (← IS); Ṭabarī, 417 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Ḥārith b. Ḥaṣīra ← 'Abdullāh b. Sharīk al-'Āmirī); Khwārazmī, 250 (Aḥmad b. A'tham); al-Kāmil, 57 (n.i.); Siyar a'lām, 301 (← SA-IS).

[48] Ibn Ṭāwūs, 38 (n.i.); Majlisī, 44:392 (← al-Mufīd).

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accounts of just how many times he went back and forth, how many skins full of water he brought back, and how many (if any) people went with him. But, there is no disagreement in their depictions that he did put up a spectacular show of force, slaughtering a significant enough number of troops in his path to frighten the remaining soldiers away from their positions defending the river, and for a long enough period of time to afford him the chance to fill at least one waterskin and return to Ḥusayn's camp.[49] However, such portrayals indicate that, just as he reached Ḥusayn's camp again, the spiteful troops, upset at being humiliated by 'Abbās, shot arrows not at 'Abbās, but at the waterskin, to prevent him from succeeding in his mission. With the skin pierced and the water all spilled onto the sands of Karbalā', 'Abbās could not bear to face the expectant children, thirsty and awaiting his return. He asked Ḥusayn's permission to return to the battlefield and fight to his death. He did so, and the troops were so upset at his having broken through their defenses and humiliated them that, after they surrounded him and killed him, they chopped his body into pieces, decapitating him and dismembering his arms and legs in rage.[50] Later Shī'ī sources seem to have embellished the story greatly, eventually resulting in an account that pervades the modern Shī'ī conceptualization of

[49] As with Ḥusayn himself, depictions of Ḥusayn's companions in the sources are also examples of Noth's 'thousandman' topos.

[50] This account of decapitation of 'Abbās's appendages first appears in Qādī Nu'mān's work, 35 (← Ismā'īl b. Aws ← Abū 'Abdullāh Ja'far b. Muḥammad), and may be yet another anti-Umayyad smear. Considering that dismemberment of corpses is banned in Islamic law, this may be an attempt to attribute un-Islamic behavior to the Umayyad army and further contrast the Umayyads impiety with Ḥusayn's aura of piety/genealogy consciousness.

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Karbalā', but appears to be historically inaccurate. In fact, it seems that this Shī'ī notion of the role of 'Abbās during the battle is one that has been confused with the early Islamic accounts of Ja'far b. Abī Ṭālib during the battle of Mu'ta, in which he served as the standard-bearer for the Prophet during his lifetime. When the Prophet was informed that Ja'far's arms were cut one after the other while holding the standard for the Muslims, the Prophet nicknamed Ja'far "al-Ṭayyār," for he would be given two wings as heavenly replacements for his dismembered arms.[51] It seems that the later Shī'ī sources confuse the earlier account of the troops' post-mortem decapitation and dismemberment of 'Abbās and, in the course of providing a more heroicized characterization construct a depiction that portrays 'Abbās's dismemberment as occurring *during* his battle with the Umayyad troops, thereby 'creating' a Shī'ī equivalent of the Prophet's companion, Ja'far al-Ṭayyār. Like Ja'far, such accounts indicate that 'Abbās was so brave that he fought holding the standard in his left and his sword in his right, until his right hand was cut off, and he fought with his left and held the standard in his mouth, until finally his left arm was also cut off and he caught the sword in his mouth and continued fighting until he was decapitated. Although this heroic characterization does not appear in the early sources, even those that have a clear pro-Ḥusayn bias and heroicize other aspects of Ḥusayn and his companions, it is unclear just how long after the battle of Karbalā' the more heroic version of 'Abbās's final battle entered Shī'ī folk tradition. It does not appear explicitly

[51] See Ibn Hishām, 531-540.

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in the written sources until quite late.[52] Although these accounts are definitely more dramatic, and serve rather well in creating a mythical figure to be the Shī'ī equivalent of the character of Ja'far al-Ṭayyār in the Sunnī heritage, this is apparently the result of an oral Shī'ī folk heritage that over the centuries became accepted even by scholars and then appropriated into their written works.[53]

However, unlike those of 'Abbās b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, characterizations of 'Alī b. Ḥusayn evolve not only over the centuries with each new source, but sometimes also within each individual account of the Karbalā' narratives. Despite the fact that 'Alī did not participate in the battle of Karbalā' because of his illness, he is depicted as having played a pivotal role at one point in the narratives during Ḥusayn's journey from Mecca to 'Irāq. When news of the murder of Muslim b. 'Aqīl and Hāni' b. 'Urwa by Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād reached Ḥusayn's camp, 'Alī was the one who urged his father Ḥusayn not to continue towards 'Irāq. [54] As was the case with Muslim b. 'Aqīl and Hāni' b. 'Urwa, it

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[52] Majlisī, 44:298 (← al-Ṣadūq ← al-Hamadānī ← 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm ← al-Yaqtīnī ← Yūnus b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān ← Ibn Isbāṭ ← 'Alī b. Sālim ← his father ← Thābit b. Abī Safīya al-Thumālī ← 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn), and Majlisī, 45:40 (← Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Ḥamza ← al-Nawfalī ← Ḥammād b. Īsā al-Juhanī ← Mu'āwīya b. 'Ammār ← Ja'far b. Muḥammad); there is also an indirect reference to this in a *ziyāra* text included by Majlisī, 45:66 (← Ibn Shahrāshūb ← Abū Ja'far al-Ṭūsī ← Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. 'Ayyāsh ← Sālih b. Mansūr b. 'Abd al-Mun'im b. Nu'mān al-Baghdādī ← Muḥammad b. Ghālib al-Iṣfahānī).

[53] See epilogue on folk Karbalā'.

[54] Ibn Sa'd, 67 (← IS). There seems to be some confusion as to precisely which 'Alī this was. Because Ḥusayn named all three of his sons 'Alī, it is not clear which 'Alī urged his father to return to Mecca, which 'Alī was killed in Karbalā', and which 'Alī was sick and taken prisoner with the women. Despite the confusion, there is a consensus

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seems that this characterization of 'Alī's cowardice in face of death may have also served as a backdrop that accentuates his later bravery during his confrontations with 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād and even with Yazīd himself.

However, 'Alī b. Ḥusayn played his most important roles after the battle of Karbalā'. These include his role in defending the verbal attacks on his father when he was taken along with the prisoners to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād at Kūfa, and then to Yazīd himself at Damascus, as we have discussed in the previous chapter on Umayyad propaganda. However, with regards to the sources' characterizations of 'Alī b. Ḥusayn, a comparison of the depictions of 'Alī b. Ḥusayn and his aunt Zaynab during these confrontations with 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād and Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya are noteworthy. Some sources portray Zaynab as the sharp-tongued 'Alid who rebuts every accusation directed at Ḥusayn or his father 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, and criticizes, or even scathingly insults the Umayyads and their ancestry. [55] On the other hand, some sources portray 'Alī b. Ḥusayn as having assumed this role, perhaps because, even though he was much younger than his aunt, he was a male. [56] Not only that, but by Majlisī's time, we find blatant references

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among scholars that the eldest 'Alī died fighting at Karbalā', the next to eldest was sick and taken prisoner, and the youngest infant child was shot by an arrow during the battle.

[55] Khwārazmī, 61 (← Bashīr b. Ḥudhaym al-Asadī); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 61 (← Bashīr b. Khuzaym al-Asadī).

[56] Ibn Sa'd, 83 (← IS); Balādhurī, 208 (n.i.), 220 (← Hishām b. 'Ammār ← al-Walīd b. Muslim ← his father); Ṭabarī, 461 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Abū Ja'far al-'Absī ← Ibn 'Umāra al-'Absī); Ṭabarānī, 61 (← 'Alī b. 'Abd al-'Azīz ← al-Zubayr ← Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Makhzūmī); Khwārazmī, 2:43 (← Abū Mikhnaf); al-Kāmil, 82 (n.i.). Sometimes this is in addition to Zaynab's rebuttal.

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Pericope	IZB	ISA	BAL	DIN	YAQ	DUL	TAB	KUL	MAS	ISF	TBR	QNU	BAG	KHW	IAS	UGH	KAM	ITA	SIY	TIS	IHJ	MAJ
'Abbas takes matters in his own hands		X					X							X		X	X		X	X		
'Abbas follows orders to the letter																		X				X
'Abbas dismembered post-mortem												X										
'Abbas dismembered during battle																						X

Fig. 10. Pericopes of Husayn's brother, 'Abbās.

that portray Zaynab as having a role undoubtedly subservient to 'Alī. Whereas previous sources depict both Zaynab and 'Alī as being involved in the rhetorical confrontations, but one being granted more authority than the other, Majlisī clearly characterized 'Alī as having more authority, even to the point of belittling Zaynab to some degree.[57] As with our earlier example of pillaging of Ḥusayn's camp and the major importance given by the author to uncovering of the faces of the women, this radical change in attitude towards Zaynab in Majlisī's work, in stark contrast to earlier sources, may be an indication of changing attitudes towards women in Islamicate society by Majlisī's time.[58]

Nevertheless, in addition to these rhetorical confrontations, there is also a reference to an emotional outburst on 'Alī's part when the prisoners first entered the gates of Kūfa. As they were paraded through the streets of Kūfa, 'Alī is depicted as having seen the Kūfans crying at the plight of the prisoners, and sarcastically exclaimed, "You are crying?! Then who is it that killed us?!" [59] And, even after the prisoners were

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[57] In one account in Majlisī, 45:18 (← Ibn Ṭāwūs, 68), when Zaynab attempted to speak, 'Alī silenced her (literally) and ordered her to let him speak. In another account on page 175 (← Ibn Shahrāshūb ← al-Awzā'ī), Zaynab herself is depicted as saying "'Alī is the spokesperson for us all" when she was confronted.

[58] Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis, as with the previous examples, serious research by historians interested in such women's issues is necessary with other sources of the same period to see if this phenomenon is consistent throughout a variety of sources in the period, and not specific to Majlisī's.

[59] Ibn al-Zubayr, 157 (← Z) ; Ibn Sa'd, 89 (← 'Alī b. Muḥammad ← Ḥabbāb b. Mūsā ← Ja'far b. Muḥammad ← his father ← 'Alī b. Ḥusayn); Khwārazmī, 2:40 (← Bashīr b. Ḥudhaym al-Asadī); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 61 (← *muṣannif kitāb al-maṣābīḥ*); Majlisī, 45:108 (← Ibn Ṭāwūs). Note: According to Tehrānī's *al-Dharī'a*, there are sixty nine works that fall under this title and it is uncertain which of these Ibn Ṭāwūs is referring to.

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returned to Madīna, there are a number of references indicating that 'Alī established a non-confrontational, and even somewhat cooperative, relationship with several Umayyad figures. For example, Ṭabarī mentions that when 'Abdullāh b. Zubayr revolted and the Madinese were openly hostile to the Umayyads in Madīna, Marwān b. Ḥakam asked 'Alī to protect his family while he himself escaped, to which 'Alī agreed, and kept his promise.[60] This portrayal speaks not only to the character of 'Alī, that the same Umayyad who was so insistent on killing his father (Ḥusayn) before he left Madīna only a few short years ago, would now approach Ḥusayn's son with such a request, but also to just how much the Madinese are portrayed as having respected 'Alī, such that they would disregard his harboring their (and indeed even his own) enemies. There is also a reference in the work of Qāḍī Nu'mān that cites an account of a property deal between 'Alī b. Ḥusayn and al-Walīd, after Karbalā'. [61] In an apparent attempt to pay off some of Ḥusayn's debts to al-Walīd, 'Alī apparently exchanged a piece of property in lieu of repaying the debt. Thus, in nearly all the sources, 'Alī b. Ḥusayn is portrayed, aside from rhetorical confrontations with leading Umayyad figures after Karbalā', as politically non-confrontational, and in some instances even cooperative with members of the Umayyad establishment.

See: Aqā Buzurg Tehrānī, *al-Dharī'a ilā taṣānīf al-Shī'a,* v. 21 (Tehran: Chāpkhāne-ye Majlis, 1956), 78-93.

[60] Ṭabarī, 485 (← Muḥammad b. Sa'd ← Muḥammad b. 'Umar).

[61] Qāḍī Nu'mān, 125 (← Ja'far b. Muḥammad).

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Pericope	IZB	ISA	BAL	DIN	YAQ	DUL	TAB	KUL	MAS	ISF	TBR	QNU	BAG	KHW	IAS	UGH	KAM	ITA	SIY	TIS	IHJ	MAU
'Ali sharp-tongued with Umayyads		X	X				X				X			X								
Zaynab sharp-tongued with Umayyads														X				X				
'Ali sharp with Umayyads, and silences Zaynab																						X
'Ali sharp-tongued with Kufans	X	X												X				X				X
'Ali protects Marwan after Karbala							X															
'Ali deals with Walid after Karbala												X										

Fig. 11. Pericopes of Husayn's son, 'Alī.

Another figure whose characterization in the sources is noteworthy is Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya, Ḥusayn's half-brother. He is depicted in some of the sources as having attempted to convince Ḥusayn not to leave Madīna in the first place. He is the only figure from within Ḥusayn's own family to be portrayed as even slightly unsupportive of Ḥusayn's goals. When Husayn gathered his women and children to begin their journey, some accounts indicate that Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya came to Ḥusayn and prevented him from taking his own children along with Ḥusayn's women and children.[62] Others show him as being thoroughly supportive of and supported by Ḥusayn.[63] Majlisī even includes an account that compromises between the two, stating that it was not Muhammad b. al-Ḥanafīya's treason that caused him to remain behind in Madīna while Ḥusayn took the rest of his family and went to Karbalā'. Rather, according to this account, it was at Ḥusayn's own request that he stayed behind because Ḥusayn wanted one of his family members to remain an 'insider' and inform him of the goings-on in Madīna while he was away. This appears to have been a construction designed to compromise between previous sources' characterizations of Ḥusayn's half-brother Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya by providing an 'excuse' legitimizing his absence at Karbalā'.

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[62] Ibn 'Asākir, 211 (← IA-IS); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 27 (← Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī, *fī kitāb al-rasā'il* ← Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā ← Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn ← Ayyūb b. Nūḥ ← Ṣafwān ← Marwān b. Ismā'īl ← Ḥamza b. Ḥamrān ← Abū 'Abdullāh). Note: even though Ibn Ṭāwūs quotes Kulaynī's work, this particular text is no longer extant. See: Tehrānī, *al-Dharī'a,* 10:239.

[63] Kulaynī, 303 (← Sahl ← Muḥammad b. Sulaymān ← Hārūn b. al-Jaḥm ← Muḥammad b. Muslim ← Abū Ja'far); Khwārazmī, 189 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); al-Kāmil, 16 (n.i.); Majlisī, 44:327 (← al-Mufīd).

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Yazīd: Villain or Victim?

Just as with the characterizations of Ḥusayn, the ways in which the sources depict Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya are just as revealing with regard to authorial biases. Unlike Ḥusayn, whose character is constructed only from accounts of events before and during the battle of Karbalā', and like 'Alī b. Ḥusayn, whose character is constructed mostly from accounts of post-Karbalā' rhetorical confrontations, we have many more accounts available for study in the sources' characterizations of Yazīd himself. This is partly because of the fact that he lived through each of the three main stages of the Karbalā' narratives (before, during, and after the battle), but also because of the apparent concern of the sources with regard to assigning responsibility for the murder of Ḥusayn. Because of this fact, the way in which an author characterizes Yazīd, by default, often determines the degree to which the responsibility for Ḥusayn's murder laid on his shoulders. Moreover, a clearly inverse relationship is apparent in the sources where Yazīd is depicted as free from responsibility for the murder of Ḥusayn, and responsibility is shifted instead to his governors and generals in characterizations of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, 'Umar b. Sa'd, and Shimr b. Dhī al-Jawshan. The depictions of Yazīd are based on a number of accounts in the sources that include descriptions of his correspondences to his governors at Madīna, Basra, and Kūfa, as well as accounts of his reaction to the delivery of the head of Ḥusayn to his court, and accounts of the ways in which he dealt with the prisoners of Ḥusayn's camp when they were marched to his court at Damascus. These types of accounts appear in

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nearly all of the sources. In addition, a number of sources also include accounts that present clearly extreme characterizations of Yazīd, depicting him either as a pharaoh-like tyrant, or, conversely, as almost angelic in his kindness. Although such clearly biased characterizations can not be trusted for their historical accuracy, they are worthy of examination for they may shed some light on why such polarized views of Yazīd evolved when they did during the development of depictions of the events of Karbalā'. This is particularly significant when bearing in mind that the first depiction of Yazīd, appearing in the very earliest source, is surprisingly neutral, despite being written by a Zaydī Shī'ī author.[64]

The first of the caliphal communications that serves to build Yazīd's character in the narratives is one which he issued to his governor at Madīna immediately after the death of the caliph Mu'āwiya. In this letter Yazīd instructed his governor at Madīna, al-Walīd, to call upon Husayn, 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubayr and 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar, to give their oaths of allegiance to Yazīd, son of the late caliph Mu'āwiya. The way in which Yazīd is perceived by the reader of the narratives is heavily dependent on the way this letter is worded in the sources. Some sources give accounts that depict Yazīd as 'ordering' al-Walīd, rather than 'requesting' from him, and some even mention a 'secret communiqué' that instructed al-Walīd to kill Ḥusayn, delivered along with a public letter requesting his oath of allegiance. Yet other sources mention only one rather harsh letter ordering the

[64] Ibn al-Zubayr, 157 (← Z).

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governor to deliver Ḥusayn's head to Damascus if he refused to give the oath of allegiance. Of all the sources, the only one sympathetic to Yazīd in this regard is Ibn Sa'd's, where Yazīd's letter to al-Walīd is not at all harsh or secretive.[65] In fact, the letter is rather friendly, and it is Ḥusayn's actions that are portrayed to appear negatively. The only other source to portray Yazīd positively is al-Dhahabī's *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, which characterizes Yazīd as being an almost angelic figure. [66]

Most sources, however, provide accounts of either an official letter clearly instructing al-Walīd to kill Ḥusayn, or a secret letter "the size of a mouse's ear" with those same instructions but sent along with the politically correct official letter, or accounts of both. [67] Several clearly pro-Husaynid sources even go so far as to include accounts of Yazīd, after hearing of Ḥusayn's refusal to give his oath of allegiance and his escape to Mecca, ordering a special squad of thirty assassins armed with swords under

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[65] Ibn Sa'd, 55 (← IS).

[66] Siyar a'lām, 295 (← SA-IS). Oddly, enough, al-Dhahabī's other work, *Tārikh al-Islam*, rather than being consistent with the first work, includes accounts of the opposite view as most sources do, indicating that Yazīd actually ordered al-Walīd to kill Ḥusayn if he did not submit and pledge his oath of allegiance, in addition to one account of the letter as mentioned in his Siyar a'lām [Tārīkh al-Islam, 4:169, 170 (← Juwayrīya b. Asmā'), and 5:7 (← Marwān b. Sa'd ← al-Madā'inī← Juwayrīya).

[67] Ya'qūbī, 241 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 338 (Hishām b. Muḥammad ← Abū Mikhnaf); Khwārazmī, 180, 185 (Aḥmad b. A'tham); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 10 (n.i.); Tārīkh al-Islam, 4:169-70 (← Juwayrīya b. Asmā'); Majlisī, 44:312 (← Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Baghdādī ← al-Ḥasan b. 'Uthmān b. Zīyād al-Tustarī ← Ibrāhīm b. 'Ubaydullāh b. Mūsā b. Yūnus b. Abī Isḥāq al-Subay'ī ← his aunt, Marīsa d. Mūsa b. Yūnus b. Abī Isḥāq ← her aunt Ṣafīya d. Yūnus b. Abī Isḥāq al-Hamadānīya← Bahja d. al-Ḥārith b. 'Abdullāh al-Ta'labī ← her uncle, 'Abdullāh b. Manṣūr ← Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn), 322 (← Ibn Ṭāwūs).

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their *Ḥajj* pilgrimage garb, to slay Ḥusayn in the Meccan *ḥaram* sanctuary during his performance of the *Ḥajj* pilgrimage. [68] Such sources depict this as one of the reasons that prompted Ḥusayn to leave Mecca for 'Irāq. The second communiqué sent by Yazīd, which apparently included instructions for the murder of Ḥusayn appears in the narratives after Yazīd was informed of Ḥusayn's departure from Mecca. This letter was addressed to his then-governor at Basra, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, and instructed him to take responsibility for the governorship of Kūfa in addition to that of Basra. Most sources seem to agree that in this letter Yazīd specifically instructed 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād to kill Ḥusayn's messenger to Kūfa, Muslim b. 'Aqīl, and even to deal with Ḥusayn himself, in the event of his arrival.[69]

In addition to the accounts of these letters, much of the most important aspects of the characterizations of Yazīd are found in accounts of his reaction to the aftermath of the battle of Karbalā', and particularly in accounts of the delivery of the decapitated heads and the prisoners to Yazīd at his court in Damascus. As we shall see in the next chapter, many of the accounts of the Karbalā' narratives become more and more confused cut-and-paste versions of previous accounts, and most of the narratives become even more

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[68] Ya'qūbī, 249 (n.i.); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 26 (← Ma'mar b. Ja'far, *'fī maqtal al-Ḥusayn'*); Majlisī, 45:99 (*ra'aytu fī ba'ḍ al-kutub*).

[69] Dīnawarī, 231 (n.i.); Ya'qūbī, 242 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 357 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Numayr b. Wa'la ← Abū al-Waddāk); Khwārazmī, 198 (Aḥmad b. A'tham); al-Kāmil, 23 (n.i.), Ibn Ḥajar, 79 (← 'Ammār b. Mu'āwīya al-Duhnī ← Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan (sic.); Majlisī, 44:359 (← al-Mufīd).

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confused the closer the reader gets to the narrative conclusion. Of all of these accounts, however, those of the delivery of the heads and prisoners to Yazīd at his court in Damascus are the most confused of all. Perhaps this may be because, although some of the actions and communiqués executed prior to the battle also serve to characterize Yazīd, his words and deeds in reaction to the delivery of the heads and prisoners are particularly decisive in defining not only his position on the murder of Ḥusayn, but also his character in general. At this point in the narrative most of the sources provide accounts depicting some combination of, if not all of the following events. The first has already been discussed in the previous chapter, when the messenger delivering Ḥusayn's head insulted Ḥusayn in an attempt to curry favor with the caliph, and Yazīd reacted by insulting the messenger.[70] The next one of these events is usually depicted as some sort of indication by Yazīd, of his sorrow as a result of Ḥusayn's death, either by crying, or by making a statement such as, "I wish he were still alive," or a statement such as, "I wouldn't have killed him" followed by curses and insults directed towards 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād. In all of the narratives that mention such events they are depicted as occurring as soon as Yazīd saw the head of Ḥusayn, which, according to some, was brought before him on a golden platter. The wording of Yazīd's response varies in different sources,[71] but it is always

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[70] For details, see chapter 2, 'of hawks and doves'.

[71] Ibn Sa'd, 82 (← IS); Balādhurī, 212 (n.i.); Dīnawarī, 261 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 460 (← Hishām ← 'Abdullāh b. Yazīd b. Rawḥ b. Zinbā' al-Judhāmī ← his father ← al-Ghāz Ḥimyar b. Rabī'a al-Jurashī), 465 (← Hishām ← Abū Mikhnaf ← Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī ← 'Abdullāh al-Thumālī ← al-Qāsim b. Bukhayt); Ṭabarānī, 60 (← 'Alī b.

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one that makes him appear sympathetic to those mourning the loss of Ḥusayn, and this depiction occurs in most of the sources. Furthermore, the accounts that include Yazīd's cursing of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād are clearly the beginnings of a shift from placing the blame for the killing of Husayn from Yazīd onto his governor, and, as we shall see, in some instances this shift of blame goes even further down the Umayyad power-structure down to 'Umar b. Sa'd and even lesser generals.

Another account, which is included in most sources, portrays how Yazīd, after having publicized his sorrow at the death of Ḥusayn and after insulting the messenger for having disrespected Ḥusayn, reached for a whip and maliciously beat the decapitated head of Ḥusayn.[72] Interestingly, unlike most other depictions, which show at least some consistency in *isnāds* going back to a small circle of tradents, the *isnāds* for different sources' versions of this account are all from different sets of sources. Clearly contradictory to Yazīd's earlier statements of sorrow at the death of Ḥusayn, his beating the decapitated head with a stick is certainly a problematic inclusion in those sources that

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'Abd al-'Azīz ← al-Zubayr ← Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Makhzūmī); Qāḍī Nu'mān, 124 (← Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib); al-Kāmil, 84 (n.i.).

[72] Ibn Sa'd, 82 (← IS); Balādhurī, 214 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 390 (← 'Ammār al-Duhnī ← Abū Ja'far), 465 (← Hishām ← Abū Mikhnaf ← Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī ← 'Abdullāh al-Thumālī ← al-Qāsim b. Bukhayt); Mas'ūdī, 61 (n.i.); Iṣfahānī, p 119 (← al-Madā'inī ← Mukhlid b. Ḥamza b. Bayḍ ← Habbāb b. Mūsā ← Ḥamza b. Bayḍ ← Hāni' b. Thubayt al-Qāyidī); Ṭabarānī, 39 (← Abū Zinbā' Rawḥ b. al-Farah al-Misrī ← Yaḥyā b. Bukayr ← al-Layth); Khwārazmī, 2:57 (← Abū Mikhnaf), 64 (n.i.); al-Kāmil, 85 (n.i.); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 75 (n.i.); Tārīkh al-Islam, 5:19 (← Hishām ← Ja'far b. Burqān ← Yazīd b. Abī Ziyād); Majlisī, 45:131 (← al-Mufīd and Ibn Ṭāwūs), 132 (← Ibn Numā and 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān).

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include both events in their accounts. In contrast with the poem, perhaps the inclusion of both accounts is a way of portraying Yazīd as a hypocrite, showing sorrow, but only as a hypocritical public display. The accounts of Yazīd's beating the head of Ḥusayn often go hand in hand with those that relate his recitation of the following poem as he beat the decapitated head of Ḥusayn, "And [the swords] decapitated a head from a people dear / to us and those people are more worthy of blame, and more unjust."[73] The recitation of this poem seems to fit well into the context of beating the head, but, as with the beating itself, it does not quite match the portrayal of a sorrowful Yazīd mourning the loss of Ḥusayn. In fact, the poem seems to legitimize not only Yazīd's beating the head, which is perhaps why most sources include both accounts one after the other, but, it also legitimizes, by extension, the killing of Ḥusayn itself. The poem attempts to show that, although what the Umayyads did to Ḥusayn was not commendable, that which Ḥusayn did to the Umayyads was far worse. Also, in addition to this poem, some sources also include accounts of Yazīd's recitation of another poem,

> Oh how I wish that my ancestors at Badr could have seen
> How upset the Khazraj are from the falling of the sword.
> We have killed the chief of their elders
> And we have made it even for Badr, so now we are even.[74]

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[73] *Yufalliqna hāman min rijālin a'izzatin / 'alaynā wa hum kānū a'aqqa wa azlamā.* See: Ibn Sa'd, 82; Balādhurī, 214; Ṭabarī, 390, 465; Iṣfahānī, 119; Ṭabarānī, 60, Khwārazmī, 2:57; al-Kāmil, 85; Tārīkh al-Islam, 5:19 (same *isnāds* as above).

[74] *Layta ashyākhi bi Badrin shahidū / jaza'a al-Khazraji min waq'i al-asali / qad qatalnā al-qarma min ashyākhihim / wa a'adalnāhu bi Badrin, fa'tadal* . See: Iṣfahānī, 119 (n.i.); Khwārazmī, 64 (← Fāṭima d. al-Ḥusayn); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 75 (n.i.); Majlisī, 45:156 (← 'Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Abī al-Hadīd *fī sharh nahj al-balāgha*), 167 (← 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm),

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This poem, although not composed by Yazīd himself, clearly harks back to taking revenge for the battle of Badr, where Ḥusayn's grandfather Muḥammad led the Muslim forces that defeated forces gathered by Yazīd's grandfather Abū Sufyān.[75] The inclusion of this poem, as with the previous example, also serves to explain, if not legitimize, not only Yazīd's beating of Ḥusayn's head with a stick, but also perhaps the killing of Ḥusayn as well. Moreover, the inclusion of such a poem in the depictions of Yazīd's reaction to Ḥusayn's death may also serve to characterize Yazīd as having been motivated not by Islamic principles of caliphate, but by base *jāhilī* pride, contrasting his characterization sharply against the piety/genealogy conscious sharacteristics of leadership possessed by Ḥusayn.

After the recitation of such poetry and after beating the head of Ḥusayn with a stick, the sources once again characterize Yazīd quite differently, or, rather, they return to the previous characterization of Yazīd from before beating Ḥusayn's head. Once again, Yazīd is portrayed as a sympathetic figure, this time towards Ḥusayn's women who were taken prisoner. In one instance as mentioned previously, when a soldier asked Yazīd's permission to take one of Ḥusayn's women as booty, Ḥusayn's son, 'Alī b. Ḥusayn, and

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186 (← al-Rāwandī ← Abū al-Faraj Sa'īd b. Abī al-Rajjā ← Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar al-Khānī ← Abū al-Qāsim Bakrād b. al-Ṭayyib b. Sham'ūn ← Abū Bakr b. Aḥmad b. Ya'qūb ← Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān ← Sa'd ← al-Ḥasan b. 'Umar ← Sulaymān b. Aḥmad al-A'mash.

[75] See Ibn Hishām, 289-314.

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Ḥusayn's sister, Zaynab d. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, attempted to protect her, exclaiming to Yazīd that he could allow that only if he abandoned Islam. After an initial fit of arrogance in which Yazīd declared "I can do whatever I want!" Yazīd is depicted as having reproached the soldier for thinking such thoughts of the women of Ḥusayn's camp. Then, not only is he depicted as having dealt with the women favorably, by taking them into his own harem along with his own women, but he even praised Ḥusayn when the women wailed in mourning of his death. He is characterized as saying that Ḥusayn was a great man, certainly deserving of such mourning, and then cursing ʿUbaydullāh b. Ziyād for having killed Ḥusayn. Most of the sources end their versions of the Karbalā' narratives with the above accounts,[76] ending with Yazīd giving the women double the value of whatever property was stolen from them, and equipping them rather luxuriously for their return trip from Damascus to Madīna.

However, Yazīd's character in most of these depictions is very inconsistent at best, alternating back and forth from a sympathetic Yazīd, to a violent, spiteful Yazīd seeking revenge, and then back again. Some accounts even portray an alternation between the two types of characterizations within a matter of a single line, not to mention within the extent of a number of pages. For example, Ibn Saʿd includes an account where

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[76] Ibn Saʿd, 84 (← IS); Balādhurī, 217 (n.i.), 226 (← Ḥusayn ← Saʿd b. ʿUbayda); Ṭabarī, 462 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Ḥārith b. Kaʿb ← Fāṭima d. ʿAlī), 464 (← Hishām ← ʿAwāna b. al-Ḥakm al-Kalbī); Qāḍī Nuʿmān, 105 (← ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn); al-Kāmil, 88 (n.i.); Ibn Ḥajar, 81 (← ʿAmmār b. Muʿāwīya al-Duhnī ← Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn); Majlisī, 45:145 (← Muḥammad b. ʿAlī ← Abū ʿAlā' al-Ḥāfiẓ ← *mashāyikhihi*).

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Yazīd expressed sorrow at the loss of Ḥusayn, cursed 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, but then immediately cursed 'Alī b. Ḥusayn and his father as well.[77] It seems that the reason for these complex and intertwined discrepancies in the characterizations of Yazīd may be attributed to the authors' attempts to combine parts of narrations available from previous sources in order to make some historical sense of the conflicting types of accounts. Although this is quite clear from examination of textual evidence, in it nearly impossible to corroborate the textual evidence (at least in this instance) with *isnād* evidence, when prime narrative examples such as Ibn Sa'd's provide only a combined *isnād* that does not allow is to distinguish which part of the narrative comes from which source.[78] Nevertheless, it is clear that such combined reports, while blending parts of varying and sometimes opposing accounts, simultaneously refrain from adopting the overly radical characterizations of either extreme type.

Some authors, however, seemed to have no qualms whatsoever with characterizing Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya in the extreme, either favorably or not. Among those works that characterize Yazīd as a completely evil figure are a number of works by Shī'ī authors, or authors with apparently Shī'ī tendencies, including Mas'ūdī, Khwārazmī, Ibn Ṭāwūs, and Majlisī. But, surprisingly, Al-Dhahabī's *Tārīkh al-Islam* must be included

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[77] Ibn Sa'd, 83 (← IS).

[78] More detailed explanation of this phenomenon in the context of the Karbalā' narratives is provided in section on comprehensive *isnād* analysis in the concluding chapter.

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among these Shī'ī or pro-Shī'ī works with regard to al-Dhahabī's unfavorable characterization of Yazīd, and, as we shall see in the next chapter, much of the rest of the depictions in Dhahabī's *Tārīkh al-Islam* of a variety of other themes that we have examined also parallel very closely many of the clearly Shī'ī and pro-Shī'ī works. Oddly, however, this is in stark contrast to the depictions of the Karbalā' narrative as portrayed in al-Dhahabī's other work that deals with Ḥusayn and Karbalā', his *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, which in all respects, depicts a relatively pro-Umayyad and pro-Yazīd stance with regard to nearly every one of the themes we have examined thus far.[79]

But, of the sources that characterize Yazīd as the penultimate villain-caliph, the first is Mas'ūdī's *Murūj al-dhahab*.[80] In it, Yazīd is portrayed as practically 'buying' the people's support after the death of his father Mu'āwiya, distributing gold coins to the public, increasing salaries, raising positions, and other assorted depictions of blatant bribery. In addition, the narrator comments that Yazīd's court was the epitome of total corruption, including wine drinking, half-naked singing girls, and monkeys, and all these even when he visited the holy cities of Madīna and Mecca. There are also direct references to the Madinese being angered by the alcoholism of Yazīd and his Umayyad followers, and by their murder of Ḥusayn. All of this is concluded by what may perhaps be the harshest condemnation in all the sources, stating that "even the pharaoh was more

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[79] See Chapter 4 in particular.

[80] Mas'ūdī, 68, (n.i.).

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just." [81] This is quite a harsh condemnation, considering that the pharaoh may well be the most evil of rulers referred to in the Qur'ān, and such portrayals are representative of extremely unfavorable characterizations of Yazīd in the Karbalā' sources.

In Khwārazmī's work, rather than putting such characterizations in the voice of the author/compiler, Khwārazmī includes accounts of a number of figures making such references within the context of the narrative itself. For example, there is one instance, when Marwān is depicted as having sought the people's support of Yazīd from the pulpit of the Prophet's mosque at Madīna, 'Abdullāh b. Abū Bakr reportedly insulted Yazīd by calling him, among other things, an alcoholic drunkard who played with monkeys. And, in this same account, even 'Ā'isha herself, who is usually portrayed as supportive of the Umayyads, reportedly refused to support Yazīd.[82] There is also another instance, depicting how it became apparent that Yazīd was willing to kill Ḥusayn, and Ibn 'Abbās, the elder of the Hāshimī clan stated that Yazīd was like a *kāfir* (heathen, unbeliever), thereby making his blood *ḥalāl* (permissible) and lawful to be shed.[83] So, unlike the previous authors, Khwārazmī worked these characterizations into the frame of the narrative rather than using his own voice as narrator. In Ibn Ṭāwūs's *al-Luhūf fī qutlā al-ṭufūf* and in Khwārazmī's *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn* Yazīd is not only characterized as being a

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[81] Mas'ūdī, 65-68 (n.i.).

[82] Khwārazmī, p, 172 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham).

[83] Khwārazmī, 191 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham).

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drunkard and a *fāsiq* (corrupt) but a great deal of emphasis is placed on the fact that Yazīd was public in his corruption, whereas other caliphs may have been corrupt, but kept a clean public face.[84]

Not unexpectedly, Majlisī includes numerous accounts of such descriptions of Yazīd's corruption, including references to the previously mentioned criticisms of the public nature of his corruption, as opposed to more discrete un-Islamic behavior, as well as references equating him with the pharaoh.[85] Majlisī also includes accounts not found in previous sources, including depictions of Yazīd's blatant antagonism towards Ḥusayn, as shown by his treatment of Ḥusayn's decapitated head after it is delivered to his court at Damascus. In one account, Yazīd is depicted as a lavishly bejeweled caliph, sitting on a special throne, wearing a crown of rubies and pearls and addressing Ḥusayn's decapitated head with sarcastic jokes and other mocking remarks. [86] In another account, Yazīd is said to have had the head of Ḥusayn next to him at all times, and that he used to place a platter on top of the head and use Ḥusayn 's head as a sort of makeshift coffee-table upon which he placed his drinks while playing chess.[87] These examples in Majlisī's work all clearly

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[84] Khwārazmī, 184 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham), Ibn Ṭāwūs, 10-11 (n.i.) .

[85] Majlisī, 45:84 (← 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm ← his father ← al-Naḍr b. Suwayd ← 'Āṣim b. Ḥamīd ← Abū 'Abdullāh), 143 (← Ibn Ṭāwūs and others) , 175 "← Ibn Shahrāshūb ← al-Awzā'ī), and 162 (← al-Ṭabarsī ← *rawā thiqāt al-ruwwāt wa 'udūluhum*).

[86] Majlisī, 45:128 (← al-Ṣadūq ← Ibn 'Abdūs ← Ibn Qutayba ← al-Faḍl ← al-Riḍā)

[87] Majlisī, 45:176.

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serve to counteract accounts in other narrations portraying a Yazīd that was saddened by the murder of Ḥusayn, which he as caliph allegedly did not intend. Such accounts are clearly intended to remove even the slightest shadow of a doubt about Yazīd's allegedly intentional, premeditated murder of Ḥusayn. Though they appear to be fabricated accounts, they nevertheless speak to the intentions of the authors in their characterizations of Yazīd.

Similar authorial intentions are apparent, albeit on the opposite extreme of the spectrum, with regard to the characterizations of Yazīd in al-Dhahabī's *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*. Unlike any work previous or after, the author of this work goes to great lengths to characterize Yazīd as a kind-hearted and just caliph, without even a hint of evil intentions toward Ḥusayn or his family.[88] At every point in the Karbalā' narrative where previous sources (even relatively mainstream, non-Shī'ī ones) indicate the slightest improper or even blatantly cruel or arrogant behavior on the part of Yazīd, al-Dhahabī seems to wipe such details clean from his characterization of Yazīd as much as possible. Even Ibn Sa'd, upon whom al-Dhahabī relies for much of his Karbalā' information, does not go so far as al-Dhahabī in portraying Yazīd in so angelic a light. *Isnād* analysis reveals that some accounts can be traced back to Ibn Sa'd, while others, although allegedly based on Ibn Sa'd (according to their *isnād*s) are actually not found anywhere in Ibn Sa'd's Karbalā' narrative. In al-Dhahabī's depiction of the Karbalā' narrative,

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[88] As has been mentioned previously, this is completely different to the characterization of Yazīd in another of al-Dhahabī's own works, Tārīkh al-Islam.

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Yazīd's letter to Walīd, for example, rather than demanding either Ḥusayn's oath of allegiance or his death, is polite and almost submissive,[89] something highly unlikely from a caliph to one of his governors. And the account of his letter to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād is similarly tame, and implicates 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād instead of Yazīd as responsible for Ḥusayn's death. The text indicates that Yazīd only requested that 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād get Ḥusayn's oath of allegiance, but rather than sending a letter in response, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād sent Ḥusayn's head instead.[90] Also, when the head was delivered to him in Damascus, not only did he place the blame on 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, but it was Yazīd himself (rather than Zaynab d. 'Alī or 'Alī b. Ḥusayn) who defended Ḥusayn's women from the soldiers who were after booty.[91] This is in stark contrast to depictions of Yazīd's arrogant, "I can do whatever I want" response as depicted in other sources. And, more dramatic than all these examples is that of Yazīd himself ordering a three-day mourning ceremony in commemoration of Ḥusayn's martyrdom.[92] Furthermore, in dealing with what is, from a pro-Yazīd point of view, the problem of Yazīd's beating Ḥusayn's decapitated head with a stick, al-Dhahabī inserts his narrative voice and explains that such accounts are probably confused with accounts of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād

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[89] Ibn Sa'd, 52 (← IS); Siyar a'lām, 295 (← SA-IS). Some of these examples can be traced back to Ibn Sa'd, but others appear only in Dhahabī's *Siyar*.

[90] Siyar a'lām, 305 (← al-Zubayr ← Muḥammad b. al-Ḍahhāk ← his father).

[91] Siyar a'lām, 303 (← SA-IS), 310 (← Aḥmad b. Janāb al-Maṣṣīsī ← Khālid b. Yazīd al-Qaṣrī ← 'Ammār al-Duhnī ← Abū Ja'far al-Bāqir).

[92] Siyar a'lām, 304 (← SA-IS).

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beating Ḥusayn's head.[93] However, al-Dhahabī fails to account for the previously mentioned revenge poems recited by Yazīd, which sources include only in their accounts of Yazīd beating the head and never in accounts of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād beating the head. Although he attempts to attribute the account to Yazīd's governor rather than to Yazīd himself, al-Dhahabī himself even includes the poem, which does not make much sense if recited by anyone other than Yazīd. Thus, although he makes use of numerous accounts that appear for the first time only in his own work, even al-Dhahabī's attempt to portray Yazīd in as good a light as possible can not ignore the overwhelming majority of other accounts, and his inclusion of Yazīd's vengeful verses betray al-Dhahabī's own hand in attempting to construct a new characterization of Yazīd.

All of these examples show that this sources' characterization of Yazīd is clearly that of a figure artificially constructed from careful filtering of depictions of earlier sources. However, aside from the extreme characterizations of Yazīd that attempt to portray him as nearly angelic, or those that demonize him, most historians tend to cut and paste the various accounts of Yazīd's correspondences and his behavior prior to, during, and after Karbalā', into some sort of attempt at a coherent construction. These attempts to edit and re-edit previously-narrated accounts often result in a narrative that is

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[93] Siyar a'lām, 309 (← Abū Barza). Despite the attempted explanation by the narrator, he also includes a number of accounts of Yazīd beating the head, such as on pages 319 (← Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Ḥamza ← his father ← his father ← Abū Ḥamza b. Yazīd al-Ḥaḍramī), and 320 (← Kathīr b. Hishām ← Ja'far b. Barqān ← Yazīd b. Abī Zīyād).

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increasingly confused and difficult to follow as it approaches the conclusion of the narrative. Nevertheless, the key role played by Yazīd in the Karbalā' narratives, coupled with the differing and sometimes opposing characterizations of him have clearly posed some serious problems for the historians of the early Islamic period, and, as with characterizations of Ḥusayn and his companions, characterizations of Yazīd speak much more to the historical and political views of the authors than they do to the historical realities of Yazīd's character.

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Pericope	IZB	ISA	BAL	DIN	YAQ	DUL	TAB	KUL	MAS	ISF	TBR	QNU	BAG	KHW	IAS	UGH	KAM	ITA	SIY	TIS	IHJ	MAJ
Assassins to kill Ḥusayn at Ka'ba					X													X				X
Yazid orders Ibn Ziyad to kill Ḥusayn				X	X									X			X				X	X
Yazid sad at the sight of Ḥusayn's head		X		X			X				X	X					X					
Yazid beats Ḥusayn's head with stick		X					X		X	X	X			X			X	X		X		X
Yazid recites 'Ḥusayn more unjust' poem		X					X			X	X			X			X			X		
Yazid recites 'revenge for Badr' poem										X				X								X
Yazid protects Ḥusayn's women later		X					X					X					X				X	X
Yazid: drunk, fornicator, monkey-lover									X					X				X				X
Yazid public in his immoral behavior														X				X				X
Yazid uses Ḥusayn's head as coffetable																						X

Fig. 12. Pericopes of Yazīd .

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Pericope	IZB	ISA	BAL	DIN	YAQ	DUL	TAB	KUL	MAS	ISF	TBR	QNU	BAG	KHW	IAS	UGH	KAM	ITA	SIY	TIS	IHJ	MAJ
Yazid's letter to Walid polite, not secretive		X																	X			
Yazid orders I.Ziyad to get bay'a, not kill																			X			
Yazid initiates protection for Ḥ's women		X																	X			
Yazid himself orders mourning		X																	X			

Fig. 13. Favorable Pericopes of Yazīd.

'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād: Scapegoat or Scapegoater?

In examining the sources' characterizations of the killers of Ḥusayn, however, we are not limited only to Yazīd himself. In fact, just as the sources' characterizations of Ḥusayn sometimes parallel those of his companions, the characterizations of Yazīd often go hand in hand with those of his governor in 'Irāq, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād. Unlike Ḥusayn and his companions, however, sometimes, characterizations of the Umayyad figures involved at Karbalā' also contrast each other. When, as occurs in some sources, blame for the killing of Ḥusayn is shifted from one figure to another, one Umayyad supporter's characterization as 'innocent' often results in another's demonization. As was the case with Yazīd, the different ways in which he is depicted indicate the author's view on where the blame for Ḥusayn's killing should fall. The sources that attempt to remove the blame from Yazīd himself and place it instead upon his subordinates tend to show Yazīd in a much more favorable light and depict 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād as a ruthless governor who viewed the head of Ḥusayn as a prize. Moreover, the clearly anti-Umayyad sources, most of which are Shī'ī or pro-Shī'ī oriented, tend to characterize 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād in the same way, but without depicting Yazīd as much better. Instead, they show both Yazīd and his governor as evil and consciously aiming for nothing less than the blood of Ḥusayn, with neither Yazīd nor 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād having any intention of a peaceful solution to the crisis.

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Ironically, despite being a Zaydī Shī'ī, just as was the case with the characterizations of Yazīd, the earliest available source does not portray 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād in such a bad light at all.[94] In fact, there is no mention of any of the ruthlessness and bloody violence so characteristic of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād in other sources. There is mention only of a scene in Kūfa when 'Alī b. Ḥusayn requested that a responsible male be sent along with the women prisoners to protect them, and 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād kindly suggested that there was no one more qualified for the position than 'Alī himself.[95] However, this characterization is an exception and far from the rule. The majority of sources, both Sunnī and Shī'ī (albeit probably for different reasons), depict 'Ubaydullāh b Ziyād as a ruthless governor who, when he could not simply enforce his will with an iron fist, also made use of tactics of trickery and deceit in order to coerce the populace into compliance. Among the instances when 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's cleverness is portrayed in the narratives is the oft-repeated account of his entrance into Kūfa after having been ordered by Yazīd to go there and keep Ḥusayn's first messenger and any potential supporters in check. In these accounts, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād is often portrayed as being rather devilish, intentionally entering the garrison city disguised as Ḥusayn.[96] Not only is

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[94] Ibn al-Zubayr, 157 (← Z).

[95] Ibn al-Zubayr, 157 (← Z).

[96] Ibn Sa'd, 65 (← IS); Ṭabarī, 358 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Numayr b. Wa'la ← Abū al-Waddāk); Mas'ūdī, 57 (n.i.); Iṣfahānī, 99 (← ISF); Khwārazmī, 200 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); Siyar a'lām, 299 (← SA-IS); Majlisī, 44:340-1 (← al-Mufīd and Ibn Numā).

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he depicted as having wrapped his head in a black turban similar to that which Ḥusayn was supposedly known for, but rather than entering Kūfa from the Basra gate of the city, he rerouted his entrance so that he would enter from the Ḥijāz gate. And, in order to keep the disguise from failing, he wrapped part of the turban over his face, and spoke to no one as the crowds of Kūfans spilled out into the streets to welcome him, thinking that he was the Ḥusayn to whom they wrote letters of invitation. It was not until he, along with the surrounding crowd, reached the governor's castle that he was forced to speak in order to demand entrance. It was then that a Kūfan supposedly recognized his voice, announced to the crowd that it was 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, and the crowd dispersed in fear.[97] Once 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād established his authority at Kūfa and after his informants verified the presence of Ḥusayn's messenger Muslim b. 'Aqīl in the house of Hāni' b. 'Urwa, there is another account portraying 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's deception of the Kūfans. When he beat and imprisoned Hāni', an armed group of Hāni''s tribesmen, thinking that Hāni' had been killed, surrounded the castle and sought revenge for his blood. 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād instructed Shurayh al-Qāḍī to disperse them by telling them that Hāni' was still alive.[98] In these accounts 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād is portrayed as having

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[97] Ibn Sa'd, 65 (in this account, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād goes to the congregational mosque and reveals his true identity by uncovering his face); Ṭabarī, 358; Mas'ūdī, 57 (in this account, instead of dispersing, the crowd pelts him); Khwārazmī, 200; Siyar a'lām, 299 (← SA-IS); Majlisī, 44:340. Same *isnāds* as above.

[98] Dīnawarī, 238 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 361 (← 'Umar b. Shabba ← Hārūn b. Muslim ← 'Alī b. Sālih ← 'Īsā b. Yazīd al-Kanāni); Khwārazmī, 205 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); Majlisī, 44:348 (← al-Mufīd).

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premeditated this scheme so that Hāni''s tribesmen would be deceived into believing that Hāni' was meeting peacefully with 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, while in fact he was bloodily beaten and imprisoned. And, as mentioned previously, when Muslim b. 'Aqīl gathered the Kūfans and surrounded the castle in revolt against him, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād is portrayed as having deceived them yet again with threats of Umayyad cavalrymen advancing towards Kūfa from Damascus.[99] The only source that fails to characterize 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād as evil and deceptive in this way is Mas'ūdī's *Murūj al-dhahab*, which clearly places the blame for all Umayyad evils on Yazīd himself.[100] The majority of the sources, however, tend to use the previously mentioned accounts to characterize 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād as savvy and clever in his deception of the people.

In addition, most accounts characterizing 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād depict him not only as deceitful, but as maliciously violent in his dealings with even the slightest opposition. This is depicted even before the battle of Karbalā', in accounts of his enforcement of a blockade around Kūfa and in his executions of Muslim b. 'Aqīl, Hāni' b. 'Urwa, and the other messengers sent by Ḥusayn. It is also apparent after the battle itself in accounts depicting his treatment of the heads of Ḥusayn and his companions, the orders he gave for the way in which their bodies should be dealt with, as well as accounts of his treatment of the prisoners of Ḥusayn's camp, and of the blind Azdī who refused to

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[99] See chapter 3, 'intensification of economic propaganda at Kūfa'.

[100] Mas'ūdī, 57-8 (n.i.).

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remain in silent acquiescence while 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād propagated Umayyad anti-Ḥusayn rhetoric in the congregational mosque of Kūfa. Whether historically accurate or not, all of these accounts serve to characterize 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād as a savage murderer, willing to stop at nothing to implement Umayyad policies against Ḥusayn.

Even before 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād went to Kūfa, he was informed that Ḥusayn had sent a messenger to the Shī'īs of Basra in order to gather their support against the Umayyads. The messenger was brought to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, and after a brief rhetorical confrontation, he ordered the messenger to be killed. This is the first account depicting 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's violence in the sources.[101] It is not depicted as an isolated incident, however, and there are numerous depictions indicating similar savagery with a number of other messengers sent by Ḥusayn to Kūfa, after 'Ubaydullāh b Ziyād reached Kūfa and took control of the city.[102] Clearly, such accounts serve to portray 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād as making an example of these people, and the overt manner of the bloody violence inflicted upon Ḥusayn's messenger as his way of publicizing his threat to any Kūfans who dared to support Ḥusayn.[103]

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[101] Ibn Sa'd, 65 (← IS); Balādhurī, 168 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 358 (← Hishām ← 'Awāna); Khwārazmī, 199 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); Siyar a'lām, 299 (← SA-IS).

[102] Dīnawarī, 232, 246 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 395 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Muḥammad b. Qays), 398 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Abū 'Alī al-Anṣārī ← Bakr b. Mus'ab); Khwārazmī, 203, 235 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 19 (n.i.); Majlisī, 44:343 (← Ibn Shahrāshūb), 369 (← al-Mufīd).

[103] i.e. their public beheadings from the top of the castle and throwing their heads and bodies down to the main street of Kūfa for all to view.

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Depictions of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's dealings with Muslim b. 'Aqīl, Ḥusayn's first messenger to Kūfa, and Hāni' b. 'Urwa, his Kūfan host, also seem to serve this purpose. These accounts portray events such that, after Muslim b. 'Aqīl heard that his host, Hāni', had been imprisoned by 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, he called the Shī'īs of Kūfa together and they revolted against the Umayyad governor, surrounding the castle and attempting to take it. But, after the success of threats of military action and economic sanctions by the Umayyads against the Kūfans, Muslim's supporters deserted him and the uprising was effectively quelled. After capturing Muslim and attempting to use him to dissuade the Kūfans from supporting Husayn, which Muslim refused to allow, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād is depicted as having ordered Muslim to be beheaded from the top of the castle, his body thrown to the main street, and his head hung up on display or sent directly to Yazīd. [104] Some depictions then indicate that 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād ordered Hāni', whom he beat bloody and imprisoned earlier, to be taken to the sheep market and slaughtered there, after which his head was also displayed, prominently next to that of Muslim b. 'Aqīl, or sent to Yazīd along with Muslim's head.[105] Surprisingly, Ibn Sa'd's

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[104] Ibn Sa'd, 66 (← IS); Balādhurī, 224 (← Sa'īd b. Sulaymān ← 'Abbād b. al-'Awām ← Ḥusayn); Ṭabarī, 380 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Abū Janāb Yaḥyā b. Abī Ḥayya al-Kalbī); Mas'ūdī, 60 (n.i.); Khwārazmī, 206 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); Siyar a'lām, 299 (← SA-IS); Tārīkh al-Islam, 4:171 (← al-Wāqidī and al-Madā'inī), 2:21 (n.i.); Ibn Ḥajar, 80 (← 'Ammār b. Mu'āwīya al-Duhnī ← Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Ḥasan [sic.]).

[105] Dīnawarī, 242 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 379 (Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Saq'ab b. al-Zuhayr ← 'Awn b. Abī Juḥayfa); Khwārazmī, 205, 213 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 21 (n.i.); Siyar a'lām, 299 (← SA-IS); Tārīkh al-Islam, 4:170-71(← al-Wāqidī and al-Madā'inī), 2:21 (n.i.); Majlisī, 44:346 (← al-Mufīd). Ibn Ṭāwūs includes an account [Ibn Ṭāwūs,

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account mentions that, rather than being imprisoned, Hāni' was killed immediately, and in a rather gruesome manner, with 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād beating his brains until gray matter splattered against the wall of the castle.[106] The sources' characterizations of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's dealing with the supporters of Ḥusayn in this manner clearly portray his aggressiveness as not only symptomatic of his 'iron-fist' political policy, but also as part of his essential personal character.

This attempt on the part of the sources to characterize 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād in this way is also apparent from the way in which he is depicted as having dealt with the head of Ḥusayn and the heads of his companions when they are brought to him after the battle of Karbalā'. The sources abound with accounts of him beating the head with a stick, as Yazīd did later, but without any revenge poetry.[107] 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's beating of

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24(n.i)] that Hāni' was killed on the roof of the castle, as were the others, and Ibn Sa'd's account indicates that Hāni' was killed immediately, with no imprisonment and mention neither of sheep market nor castle rooftop [Ibn Sa'd, 66 (← IS)].

[106] Ibn Sa'd, 66 (← IS).

[107] Ibn Sa'd, 79 (← IS); Balādhurī, 207 (n.i.); Dīnawarī, 259 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 456 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Sulaymān b. Abī Rāshid ← Ḥamīd b. Muslim); Ṭabarānī, 75 (← Abū Muslim al-Kashshī ← Sulaymān b. Ḥarb ← Ḥammād b. Salama ← 'Alī b. Zayd ← Anas b. Mālik), 76 (← Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh al-Ḥaḍramī ← al-Ḥusayn b. 'Ubaydullāh al-Kūfī ← al-Naḍr b. Shumayl ← Hishām b. Ḥassān ← Ḥafṣa d. Sīrīn); Khwārazmī, 2:43 (← Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī ← Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib al-Farzālī bi al-Rayy ← Abū Bakr Ṭāhir b. al-Ḥusayn al-Rāzī ← his uncle, al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Sa'd Ismā'īl b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sumān al-Rāzī ← Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh al-Ju'fī bi al-Kūfa ← Muḥammad b. Ja'far b. Muḥammad ← 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Anas ← Wahb b. Jurayz ← his father ← Hishām b. Ḥassān ← Muḥammad b. Sīrīn ← Anas); Ibn 'Asākir, 235 (← Abū Bakr b. 'Abd al-Bāqī ← Abū Muḥammad al-Jawharī ← Abū Bakr b. Mālik ← Ibrāhīm b. 'Abdullāh ← Sulaymān b. Ḥarb ← Ḥammād b. Salama ← 'Alī b. Zayd ← Anas b. Mālik), as well as other versions

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Ḥusayn's head is depicted as purely savage and spiteful, sometimes even including some mockery, in instances when he supposedly mentioned "what a handsome fellow Ḥusayn was!" as he beat Husayn's decapitated head. And, just as with his hanging the heads of Muslim b. 'Aqīl and Hāni' b. 'Urwa for public display before Karbalā', 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād is shown as having made a deliberate show of displaying or parading the heads of Ḥusayn and his companions around the streets of Kūfa, before sending them off to Yazīd.[108] All of these violent actions on the part of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād are depicted as clearly aimed at making examples out of resistors, so that thoughts of rebellion against the Umayyad establishment would not cross the minds of the Kūfans specifically, and throughout Umayyad territories generally. The sources' portrayals sometimes even attempt to make this obvious, as in the accounts of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's treatment of the decapitated bodies of Ḥusayn and his companions, which 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād allegedly ordered to be trampled by horses. In his letter ordering the troops at Karbalā' to do this, some accounts[109] indicate specifically his mentioning that "an example should be

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of the same account (p. 220, and others); Usd al-ghāba, 20 (← Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad b. Sa'd al-Thaqafī ← Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad ← Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. al-Haytham ← Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣā'igh ← Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad ← Jarīr b. Ḥāzim ← Muḥammad b. Sīrīn ← Anas b. Mālik); al-Kāmil, 81 (n.i.); Siyar a'lām, 310 (← Khālid b. 'Abdullāh ← al-Jarīrī), 314 (←Ḥammād b. Salama ← 'Alī b. Zayd ← Anas); Tārīkh al-Islam, 5:12 (Khālid al-Ḥadhdhā' ← al-Jarīrī ← 'Abdullāh or someone else), 16 ('Alī b. Zayd b. Jud'ān ← Anas); Majlisī, 44:194 (← al-Tirmidhī), 45:116 (← al-Mufīd), 18 ← Anas b. Mālik), as well as numerous other versions .

[108] Ibn Sa'd, 80 (← IS); Balādhurī, 212 (n.i.); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 71-3 (n.i.).

[109] Iṣfahānī, 118 (← al-Madā'inī ← Mukhlid b. Ḥamza b. Bayḍ ← Ḥabbāb b. Mūsā ← Ḥamza b. Bayḍ ← Hāni' b. Thubayt al-Qāyidī) indicates trampling, but no

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made of them." But, even though there is a clear political motivation for such violence, the very fact that the depictions show one individual as able and willing to implement such policies consistently and repetitively speaks much to the depictions' attempts to portray the character of the individual himself. The sources' characterizations of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, though each biased in its own way with regards to his responsibility for the killing of Ḥusayn, are all consistent with regard to portrayals of this violent streak in 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's character.

It is perhaps this aspect of his characterization that makes him a prime candidate for the assignment of blame of the killing of Ḥusayn. Someone portrayed as having such a propensity for violence lends himself rather well to being held responsibile for the killing of Ḥusayn. A number of sources even state this explicitly in the course of narrating the events of the battle of Karbalā'. Ṭabarānī, in his *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn*, for example, mentions in two separate instances that it was 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād who was responsible for Ḥusayn's death.[110] Khwārazmī's *maqtal* also mentions this, adding that, while others in the army were trying to stall as much as possible in the hopes of peaceful

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specific letter for making example of them; Khwārazmī, 245 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham) make examples of them; al-Kāmil, 55 (n.i).

[110] Ṭabarānī, 59 (← 'Alī b. 'Abd al-'Azīz ← al-Zubayr b. Bakkār ← Muḥammad b. al-Dahhāk ← 'Uthmān al-Ḥizāmī ← his father), 72 (← Muḥammd b. 'Abdullāh al-Ḥaḍramī ← 'Abdullāh b. al-Ḥakam b. Abī Ziyād ← Abū al-Jawāb ← Yūnus b. Abī Isḥāq ← 'Amr b. Ba'ja) Note: this account indicates that Ziyād did the killing, but this is clearly a mistake, as Ziyād died in 53/673, nearly ten years prior to the battle of Karbalā'.

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solution, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād was in a hurry to kill Ḥusayn as quickly as he possibly could.[111]

Despite the fact that all of these sources are Shī'ī or pro-Shī'ī in nature, they are not the only ones that tend to assign blame on 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād in this way. Other sources, including some early Sunnī sources, also place the responsibility on 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's shoulders in their characterization of him, though perhaps not so explicitly. These sources tend to assign the blame indirectly within the narratives, or even in isolated accounts. Though each source makes use of a different third party in doing this, all of these include accounts of some one close to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād who scolded him for having killed Ḥusayn. Ibn Sa'd's account indicates that 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād was scolded by his mother, as does Khwārazmī's account.[112] Ibn al-Athīr, in his *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh*, narrates a similar account but with 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād being scolded by his brother rather than his mother,[113] and al-Dhahabī, in his *Tārīkh al-Islam*, includes a similar narration with 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's wife rather than his mother scolding him.[114]

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[111] Khwārazmī, 243 (← Ahmad b. A'tham).

[112] Ibn Sa'd, 88 (← Ahmad b. 'Abdullāh b. Yūnus ← Sharīk ← Mughīra ← Marjāna); Khwārazmī, 2:45 (← Abū al-'Alā' ← 'Abd al-Qādir b. Muḥammad ← al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Jawharī ← Ahmad b. 'Abbās ← Ahmad b. Ma'rūf ← al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad ← Muḥammad b. Sa'd ← Aḥmad b. 'Abdullāh ← Sharīk ← Mughīra ← Marjāna).

[113] Al-Kāmil, 94 (n.i.).

[114] Tārīkh al-Islam, 5:15 (← Sharīk).

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There also exist extremely odd references in several sources that seems to also be an indirect way of indicating that 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād was responsible for Ḥusayn's death at Karbalā' by including accounts of his being cursed even after his own death. These accounts describe a scenario where 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's head was haunted by a snake that appeared periodically and meandered through the eye sockets of his skull several times before slithering off again. This account is narrated both in Ibn al-Athīr's *Usd al-ghāba* and in Majlisī's *Biḥār*.[115] Why these authors would have chosen to include this account while others did not is unclear, but it obviously plays a significant role in their characterization of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād as an accursed figure, and symbolically indicates his responsibility for the shedding of Ḥusayn's blood.

A notable exception in this trend by the sources to characterize 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād as a ruthless and murderous butcher anxious for the opportunity to spill Ḥusayn' s blood is an account in Ibn Sa'd's *Tabaqāt* that portrays him as being rather lenient when he received news of Ḥusayn's three offers, all of which would have supposedly led to a peaceful solution to the crisis at hand. In fact, it portrays him as inclined to accept one of the three offers, and being on the verge of accepting, when Shimr b. Dhī al-Jawshan,[116] a

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[115] Usd al-ghāba, 23 (← Muḥammad b. 'Īsā ← Wāsil b. 'Abd al-A'lā ← Abū Mu'āwīya← al-A'mash ← 'Umāra b. 'Umayr); Majlisī, 45:305 (← al-Tirmidhī and others ← 'Umāra b. 'Umayr).

[116] Ibn Sa'd, 69 (← IS); Balādhurī, 227 (← Abū Khaythama ← Wahb b. Jarīr ← his father); Ṭabarī, 414 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Mujālid b. Sa'īd al-Hamdānī and al-Ṣaq'ab b. Zuhayr); al-Kāmil, 55 (n.i.); Siyar a'lām, 300 (← SA-IS); Majlisī, 44:390 (← al-Mufīd).

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Pericope	IZB	ISA	BAL	DIN	YAQ	DUL	TAB	KUL	MAS	ISF	TBR	QNU	BAG	KHW	IAS	UGH	KAM	ITA	SIY	TIS	IHJ	MAJ
Ibn Ziyad disguised as Ḥusayn		X					X		X	X				X					X			X
Ibn Ziyad uses Shurayh al-Qadi trick				X			X							X								X
Ibn Ziyad kills Ḥ's messengers		X	X	X			X							X				X	X			X
Ibn Ziyad kills Muslim b. 'Aqil		X	X	?					X					X				?	X	?	X	?
Ibn Ziyad kills Hanī' b. 'Urwa				X										X				X	X	X		X
Ibn Ziyad beats Ḥusayn's head		X	X	X			X				X			X	X	X	X		X	X		X
Orders cavalry to trample over corpses										X					X		X					
Ibn Ziyad cursed, post mortem		X	X				X										X		X			X
Wanted to accept Ḥusayn's offers		X	X				X										X		X			X
Consciously refused Ḥusayn's offers																			X			

Fig. 14. Periciopes of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād.

subordinate commander of the cavalry, instigated 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād to violence. This account seems to be the cause of an equal and opposite reaction, however, in that sources such as Dīnawarī's, and al-Dhahabī's *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* do not mention the account at all, characterizing 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād as refusing the offers himself. But, even in the sources that do give accounts of Shimr's instigation, the characterization of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād is not radically transformed. In these accounts, just after his refusal of Ḥusayn's offers for peace, he ordered Shimr to deliver orders to attack to 'Umar b. Sa'd, the general of the army at the battlefield, and instructed Shimr that if 'Umar b. Sa'd did not comply with the orders immediately, he should kill 'Umar and take his place as general of the troops. This is narrated even in the accounts that take the blame off of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's shoulders slightly by way of mentioning that Shimr instigated his refusal of Ḥusayn's offers for peace.

The Umayyad Chain of Command at Karbalā'

Even though 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād was giving orders from the castle at Kūfa to the army gathered at Karbalā' against Ḥusayn, on the battlefield the troops were under the direct command of 'Umar b. Sa'd. His position as commander at the battle of Karbalā'made him highly susceptible to blame for the killing of Ḥusayn, for which he was a candidate along with Yazīd, 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, and others. It is therefore very interesting to see how the sources characterize him in relation to the other such

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candidates. As we shall see, some sources mention certain aspects of the narratives that make 'Umar b. Sa'd appear reluctant to lead the army to kill Ḥusayn, and regretful after Ḥusayn was killed, while others show him as being bought by the Umayyads, and cruel in his treatment of the bodies of Ḥusayn and his companions after their defeat.

Those that portray 'Umar b. Sa'd in a good light seem to focus on two main points in the narratives. The first of these is when Yazīd informed 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād that Ḥusayn was coming towards 'Irāq and 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād began to recruit commanders to lead the troops against Ḥusayn. Here, the way in which certain incidents are depicted makes a significant difference in the way the character of 'Umar b. Sa'd is perceived by the reader, either as selling out to Umayyads or not. Balādhurī, for example, indicates that 'Umar b. Sa'd was given the governorship of Rayy by 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād as a reward for leading a group of 4,000 troops to recapture the city from the Persians who had recently taken it, and that it was only when the situation with Ḥusayn became critical that 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād diverted him and his troops to fight against Ḥusayn.[117] This scenario depicts 'Umar b. Sa'd more as a victim of chance, as opposed to those depictions which indicate that the governorship of Rayy was a reward promised specifically for killing Ḥusayn, and which 'Umar b. Sa'd accepted with deliberate intent. But, even so, there are also reports that indicate that 'Umar b. Sa'd was reluctant to take up arms against Ḥusayn, and in which he is even depicted as having stated, "May God save me

[117] Balādhurī, 176 (← n.i.).

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from this."[118] In addition, even later in the narrative, after Ḥusayn's camp was surrounded and besieged for some time, 'Umar b. Sa'd is shown as having attempted to negotiate a peaceful settlement to the crisis, taking his time in following orders rather than hastily obeying 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's commands.[119] In the same depiction, when troops came to him requesting specific orders as to how Ḥusayn should be dealt with, he mentioned that he wished that he were not the commander.[120]

Sources also attempt to portray 'Umar b. Sa'd in a rather good light in the aftermath of the battle, when Ḥusayn and all of his companions were killed and the troops began to raid Ḥusayn's camp. During the looting some of the soldiers attempted to take Ḥusayn's women as captives, while Shimr and others made moves to kill 'Alī b. Ḥusayn, who could not fight due to extreme illness. At this point that 'Umar b. Sa'd is depicted as having stepped in, preventing both the killing of 'Alī and the enslavement of Ḥusayn's women.[121] Also, after Ḥusayn was killed and his sister Zaynab showered curses upon 'Umar b. Sa'd and reproached him for killing Ḥusayn, 'Umar b. Sa'd is portrayed as having turned his face, ashamed and unable to confront her or to formulate a response.

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[118] Dīnawarī, 254 (n.i.), Ṭabarī, 411 (← Hishām ← 'Awāna b. al-Ḥakam ← 'Ammār b. 'Abdullāh b. Yasār al-Juhanī ← his father).

[119] Khwārazmī, 243 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham).

[120] Khwārazmī, 250 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham).

[121] Ibn Sa'd, 78 (← IS); Ṭabarī, 454 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Sulaymān b. Abī Rāshid ← Ḥamīd b. Muslim); Khwārazmī, 2:38 (← Ḥamīd b. Muslim); al-Kāmil, 79 (n.i.); Majlisī, 45:61 (← al-Mufīd).

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Such accounts[122] all attempt to characterize 'Umar b. Sa'd as being wary of leading the troops against Ḥusayn but forced into the position by circumstances, eager to reach a peaceful compromise with Ḥusayn, sensitive to the needs of Ḥusayn's womenfolk, saving the life of Ḥusayn's only living son, 'Alī, and ashamed at the outcome of the battle.

However, there are also accounts in the sources that show a rather different characterization of 'Umar b. Sa'd altogether. In these accounts, for example, when 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād sought commanders to lead troops against Ḥusayn, 'Umar b. Sa'd is depicted as agreeing wholeheartedly to take the responsibility for leadership of the troops, in a conscious decision to fight Ḥusayn in order to receive the appointment as governor of Rayy.[123] Unlike the other accounts that make the relationship between his receiving the governorship of Rayy and his leadership of the army against Ḥusayn seem coincidental, these accounts attempt to show that the position as governor was a direct reward for accepting the responsibility of fighting against Ḥusayn. In fact, some sources state explicitly that 'Umar b. Sa'd sold out his principles for an Umayyad gubernatorial position at Rayy, and others state explicitly that he was specifically responsible for the killing of Ḥusayn, and that he acted consciously and intentionally.[124]

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[122] Ṭabarī, 452 (Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Ḥajjāj ← 'Abdullāh b. 'Ammār b. 'Abd Yagūth al-Bāriqī); Khwārazmī, 2:35 (← Abū Mikhnaf). Majlisī also includes a similar scenario, but with Ḥusayn himself instead of Zaynab, Majlisī, 45:10 (← Muḥammad b. Abī Ṭālib).

[123] Dīnawarī, 255 (n.i.).

[124] Ibn Ṭāwūs, 36 (n.i.); Majlisī, 44:198 (← Ibn Shahrāshūb), 306 (← *wajadtu fī ba'ḍi mu'allifāt al-mu'āṣirīn*). Majlisī also includes an apparently retrospectively

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There are also numerous accounts of 'Umar b. Sa'd being particularly harsh during the battle itself, and unnecessarily cruel in the treatment of the bodies of those killed along with Husayn. In one such depiction, for example, when Ḥurr b. Yazīd al-Riyāḥī inquired as to whether or not 'Umar b. Sa'd really intended to kill Ḥusayn, 'Umar's nearly fanatic response in the affirmative, and insistence on decapitation and dismemberment after the killing, make him appear rather evil. [125] In the same account, when Ḥusayn was finally downed in battle and the troops were gathered around him but were reluctant to shed his blood, 'Umar b. Sa'd is depicted as having fanatically ordered them to kill him, appearing nearly mad.[126] Then, the same account indicates that after Ḥusayn was killed, it was 'Umar b. Sa'd who ordered that Ḥusayn and his companions be decapitated, and, according to Majlisī, their arms and legs cut off as well.[127] Finally, some sources depict 'Umar b. Sa'd as giving the orders to repeatedly trample horses over the decapitated bodies,[128] unlike the previously mentioned accounts that attribute the

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constructed account of an incident during which 'Umar b. Sa'd was accused of being the killer of Ḥusayn by way of prophesy, years before Karbalā'. In this incident, his father, Sa'd b. Abī Waqqās was supposedly informed that the killer of Husayn would be from Sa'd's lineage, 44:256 (← al-Ṣadūq ← his father ← al-Kumaydānī ← Ibn 'Īsā ← Ibn Abī Najrān ← Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Kūfī ← 'Ubayd al-Samīn ← Ibn Ṭurayf ← Aṣbagh b. Nabāṭa), 258 (← al-Ṭabarsī and al-Mufīd ← *jā'a fī al-āthār.*)

[125] Ibn Ṭāwūs, 43 (n.i.); Majlisī, 45:55 (← Ibn Ṭāwūs).

[126] Ibn Ṭāwūs, 52 (n.i.); Majlisī, 45:55 (← Ibn Ṭāwūs).

[127] Ṭabarī, 455 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Sulaymān b. Abī Rāshid ← Ḥamīd b. Muslim); Khwārazmī, 2:39 (← Ḥamīd b. Muslim).

[128] Ṭabarī, 454 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Sulaymān b. Abī Rāshid ← Ḥamīd b.

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order to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād. In light of the above accounts, the one from among all of the sources that appears most extreme in demonizing 'Umar b. Sa'd appears to be Ibn Ṭāwūs's, which is particularly keen on depicting 'Umar b. Sa'd in as evil a light as possible.

However, 'Umar b. Sa'd is not alone among figures in the pro-Umayyad chain of command at Karbalā' that served as prime candidates for demonization in the sources. Shimr b. Dhī al-Jawshan, commander of the infantry at the battle of Karbalā', is also one of the figures of the Karbalā' narratives that tends to be demonized in the sources. Characterizations of Shimr are also worthy of study because, unlike 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād and 'Umar b. Sa'd, Shimr b. Dhī al–Jawshan has entered into Shī'ī folk tradition as the actual killer of Ḥusayn. Shimr, along with Yazīd, are the two figures every Shī'ī child is taught to hate: Yazīd for ordering the killing of Ḥusayn, and Shimr for actually carrying out the order. The historical sources, however, paint a rather different picture from the orally transmitted Shī'ī folk-traditions. Although the depictions in most sources agree that Shimr was an extremely wily character, and not at all sympathetic to Ḥusayn, nor to his companions, they differ somewhat as to Shimr's precise role in the influencing 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's decision to refuse Ḥusayn's offers for a peaceful settlement of the crisis. As with previous examples of characterizations, this interaction between

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Muslim); Mas'ūdī, 62 (n.i.); Khwārazmī, 2:38 (← Ḥamīd b. Muslim); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 56 (n.i.). It is curious that the earliest source to mention this is Tabarī's, particularly when Balādhurī and Dīnawarī, who usually include anti-Umayyad accounts, do not here.

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Pericope	IZB	ISA	BAL	DIN	YAQ	DUL	TAB	KUL	MAS	ISF	TBR	QNU	BAG	KHW	IAS	UGH	KAM	ITA	SIY	TIS	IHJ	MAJ
'Umar b. Sa'd involuntarily caught, regrets			X	X			X							X								
Protects 'Ali and women during battle		X					X							X			X					X
'Umar b. Sa'd shamed at outcome		X					X							X			X					X
Willing and eager to accept position																		X				X
Harsh and fanatical during the battle																		X				X
Orders decapitation/dis-memberment							X							X								
Orders cavalry to trample over corpses							X		X					X				X				

Fig. 15. Pericopes of 'Umar b. Sa'd.

'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād and Shimr b. Dhī al-Jawshan in the narratives plays a crucial role in determining the party or parties responsible for Ḥusayn's death. The characterizations of these two figures at this juncture in the narratives allows the authors to assign agency to one or the other of the two figures as being the responsible party. Some sources show 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād as willing to accept Ḥusayn's offers for a settlement without bloodshed on either side, but then changing his mind after Shimr's insistence that such negotiation with Ḥusayn would only show weakness on the part of the Umayyads. In these depictions, it is Shimr who pushed 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād to pursue an 'iron-fist' policy with Ḥusayn, and to demand Ḥusayn's complete submission to the Umayyads, or payment with his blood.[129] These sources clearly assign such agency in the killing of Ḥusayn to Shimr b. Dhī al-Jawshan. On the other hand, there are also a number of accounts in the sources that do not depict Shimr as instigating 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād when Ḥusayn put forth his offers for a peaceful resolution to the confiict but make it appear as 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's own volition.[130] These sources appear not to wish to assign any such agency to Shimr b. Dhī al-Jawshan, thereby making 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād and Yazīd himself appear more responsible for Ḥusayn's death in their respective depictions of the

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[129] Ibn Sa'd, 69 (← IS); Balādhurī, 182 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 414 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Ṣaq'ab b. al-Zuhayr and Mujālid b. Sa'īd al-Hamdānī); Ibn 'Asākir, 220 (← 'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad ← his uncle ← al-Qāsim b. Salām ← Ḥajjāj b. Muḥammad ← Abū Ma'shar ← some of his *shaykhs*); al-Kāmil, 55 (n.i.); Siyar a'lām, 300 (← SA-IS), 311 (← Abū Ma'shar); Tārīkh al-Islam, 5:14 (← Abū Ma'shar); Majlisī, 44:390 (← al-Mufīd).

[130] Dīnawarī, 254-5 (n.i.); Khwārazmī, 241-2 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); Ibn Ḥajar, 81 (← 'Ammār b. Mu'āwiya al-Duhnī ← Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan, (sic.)); Majlisī, 44:385 (← al-Mufīd).

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Karbalā' narrative. This interplay between these two types of sources and the characterizations of these figures from opposing points of view are curiously different from the characterization of the same figures, and Shimr in particular, in the accounts of the orally transmitted Shī'ī folk tradition.

In particular, accounts of his actions during the battle on the day of 'Āshūrā' itself contribute greatly to the characterization of Shimr as an 'evil' Umayyad supporter. These include accounts of his behavior at the camp of Ḥusayn just after Ḥusayn himself was killed. One such account depicts his ordering the murder of 'Alī b. Ḥusayn, a sick youth who was being attended to by the women while Ḥusayn and his companions were fighting.[131] There is also an account of Shimr attacking the women's tents,[132] and one of the soldiers in the Umayyad army criticizing him for fighting women and for his lack of chivalry in battle.[133] Both portrayals serve to portray Shimr as unprincipled, such that he would even kill women and children, and those unable to fight back. In addition, there

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[131] Ibn Sa'd, 78 (← IS). It is interesting to note the narrator's use of the descriptor, *mal'ūn* when describing Shimr in this instance. Also, Majlisī includes an account that indicates it was those under Shimr's command that wanted to kill 'Alī b. Ḥusayn, and Shimr simply failed to stop them, rather than giving the order himself, as in the other account. Majlisī, 45:61 (← al-Mufīd), and this is similar to Ṭabarī's account on p. 454, the differences possibly being a result of text-editing)

[132] Balādhurī, 194 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 438 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Numayr b. Wa'la ← Mishrah al-Khaywānī); Iṣfahānī, 118 (← al-Madā'inī ← Mukhlid b. Ḥamza b. Bayḍ and Khabbāb b. Mūsā ← Ḥamza b. Bayd ← Hāni' b. Thubayt al-Qāyiḍī); Khwārazmī, 2:33 (← Abū Mikhnaf); al-Kāmil, 69 (n.i.); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 37, 51 (n.i.); Majlisī, 45:20 (← Muḥammad b. Abī Ṭālib).

[133] Balādhurī, 194 (n.i.).

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are also two accounts that depict Shimr's direct personal participation in and responsibility for, the killing and then the post-mortem humiliation of Ḥusayn. The first of these indicates that it was Shimr who killed Ḥusayn by his own hand. [134] The second is an account that indicates that Shimr killed Ḥusayn and trampled the decapitated body of Ḥusayn under the hooves of his own horse.[135] All of these examples show the tendency of some sources, notably Balādhurī's, to assign direct responsibility for the killing of Ḥusayn to Shimr b. Dhī al-Jawshan, as opposed to and/or in addition to other pro-Umayyad figures.

In addition, we can see a general tendency to demonize Shimr, particularly in later sources. Such sources depict Shimr as the archetypal antagonist, whose character easily accepts accountability for the murder of Ḥusayn. These sources provide rather ugly characterizations of Shimr in this regard, and include not only the later Shī'ī or pro-Shī'ī sources, but also Sunnī sources such as Ibn al-Athīr's *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh*.[136] Some of these, notably Khwārazmī's and Majlisī's, include accounts of Ḥusayn seeing a dream

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[134] Balādhurī, 193 (← 'Umar b. Shabba ← Abū Aḥmad al-Zubayrī ← his uncle, al-Faḍīl b. Zubayr ← 'Umar al-Bazzāz ← Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī).

[135] Balādhurī, 219 (← al-Wāqidī).

[136] Balādhurī, 193 (← 'Umar b. Shabba ← Abū Aḥmad al-Zubayrī ← his uncle, al-Faḍīl b. Zubayr ← 'Umar al-Bazzāz ← Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī); Khwārazmī, 2:36 (← Abū al-Ḥasan ← Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-'Āṣimī ← Ismā'īl b. Aḥmad al-Bayḥaqī ← his father ← al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Jawharī ← Ismā'īl b. Muḥammad ← Muḥammad b. Yūnus ← Abū Aḥmad al-Zubayrī ← his uncle, al-Faḍīl b. al-Zubayr ← 'Abdullāh b. Maymūn ← Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. al-Ḥasan ← his father); al-Kāmil, 69, 72 (n.i.); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 37, 51 (n.i.); Majlisī. 45:56 (← Ḥamīd). Textual similarities indicate that Ibn Ṭāwūs borrows these pericopes from al-Kāmil.

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Pericope	IZB	ISA	BAL	DIN	YAQ	DUL	TAB	KUL	MAS	ISF	TBR	QNU	BAG	KHW	IAS	UGH	KAM	ITA	SIY	TIS	IHJ	MAJ
H's offers arrive, Shimr instigates Ibn Ziyad		X	X				X								X		X		X	X		X
Offers arrive, Shimr does not instigate				X										X							X	X
Shimr orders his men to kill ailing 'Ali		X																				X
Shimr attacks Ḥusayn's women			X																			
Shimr kills Ḥusayn with his own hands			X																			
Shimr rides his own horse over Ḥusayn			X																			
General demonization of Shimr			X														X					X

Fig. 16. Pericopes of Shimr b. Dhī al-Jawshan.

that his flesh was being eaten by a pack of dogs, led by an albino dog (symbolizing Shimr), who was most viscious among them. But, even those among this group of sources that do not relate Shimr to a dog include depictions that thoroughly demonize him, and make him appear to be an unquestionably detestable character. This is such a trend in sources after Khwārazmī's that it leads one to wonder whether they are the source of the characterizations of Shimr in orally-transmitted Shī'ī folk tradition, or whether the sources themselves were affected by a folk tradition that was already well-entrenched by the time the sources were written.[137]

Pre-Karbalā' and Incidental Figures

In addition to the main Umayyad personalities in the Karbalā' narratives, there are also a number of figures that, although not central to the battle of Karbalā' itself, played significant roles in either the events that led up to the battle, or important events in its aftermath, or both. Among these are Walīd b. 'Utba (Yazīd's governor at Madīna), Marwān b. Ḥakam (Mu'āwiya's governor at Madīna prior to al-Walīd), his brother 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥakam, Nu'mān b. Bashīr (Yazīd's governor at Kūfa prior to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's arrival from Basra) and 'Amr b. Sa'īd b. 'Ās (Yazīd's governor at Mecca). The fact that they were all either a part of the Umayyad establishment, or somehow involved with the Umayyads, makes them extremely useful in a study of depictions of the

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[137] This is discussed specifically in the next chapter: the relationship between the evolving folk tradition, ritual, and Shī'ī identity that resulted from the battle of Karbalā'.

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Karbalā' narratives. The sources' characterizations of these figures, however marginal they might be when compared to the main personalities in the Karbalā' narratives, may serve as barometers of the accuracy of our analysis of other characterizations. In fact, the marginality of their significance in the narratives makes them even more valuable in this regard. A consistency in characterizations of the Umayyads, or lack thereof, in certain sources will be valuable in the final analysis of the development of depictions of Karbalā' as a whole.

Of all of these figures, the one whose characterization is most consistent throughout all of the sources is Yazīd's governor at Madīna, Walīd b. 'Utba. Nearly all of the sources that mention him portray him as an exemplary Muslim, fearful of God and unwilling to shed the blood of Ḥusayn.[138] Walīd is consistently characterized as being keenly aware of the aura of piety and genealogy consciousness that surrounded Ḥusayn, and of the fact that the Prophet's blood ran through Ḥusayn's veins. This is clear from both Walīd's sayings and his behavior, including his reaction to Yazīd's letter ordering him to take Ḥusayn's oath of allegiance by force if necessary, his response to Marwān's advice that he should deal harshly with Ḥusayn, as well as from his own correspondences. The only source in which Walīd expresses even the slightest harshness towards Ḥusayn is Ibn 'Āsākir's *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*, but even in those accounts, Walīd's harshness is

[138] Ibn Sa'd, 55 (← IS); Dīnawarī, 228 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 340 (← Hishām b. Muḥammad ← Abū Mikhnaf); Khwārazmī, 181, 184 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 10 (n.i.); Siyar a'lām, 295 (← SA-IS); Tārīkh al-Islam, 4:169 (← Ibn Sa'd *min wujūh muta'addida*); Majlisī, 44:322 (al-Mufīd ← al-Kalbī and al-Madā'inī and others.)

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only verbal, and he actually permits Ḥusayn to leave without having given the oath of allegiance. In fact, Ibn ʿĀsākir mentions that Walīd's response to Marwān's suggestion of killing Ḥusayn was not only refusal to comply, but also a reminder that the blood of ʿAbd Manāf and the Prophet run through Ḥusayn's veins.[139] And, in Ibn al-Athīr's *al-Kāmil*, Walīd responds, "All the world is not enough reward for spilling the blood of Ḥusayn."[140] Khwārazmī and Majlisī also relate this account, adding that Walīd also sent a letter including a similar reminder to Ubaydullah b. Ziyād, but that he did not listen to the advice of Walīd, and the tone of the accounts fault ʿUbaydullāh b. Ziyād.[141] Thus, even the apparent exceptions to this characterization of Walīd are not actually exceptions, and the sources are consistent in portraying Walīd as lenient towards Ḥusayn, although this leniency can be interpreted either as his weakness during trying times, or as his firmness in faith and piety/genealogy consciousness.

The sources' characterizations of Marwān b. Ḥakam, on the other hand, are completely to the contrary, with the exception of Ibn al-Zubayr's, which is neutral.[142] When Walīd received Yazīd's letter ordering him to get Ḥusayn's oath of allegiance immediately, he called for Marwān, who served as governor of Madīna before him, and

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[139] Ibn ʿAsākir, 207 (← IA-IS).

[140] Al-Kāmil, 16 (n.i.).

[141] Khwārazmī, 221 (← Aḥmad b. Aʿtham); Majlisī, 44:368 (← Muḥammad b. Abī Tālib).

[142] Ibn al-Zubayr, 157 (← Z).

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asked for his advice on the matter. As with Walīd, nearly all of the sources agree in their characterization of Marwān, with only a few exceptions. According to these depictions, when asked for advice on how to deal with the situation, Marwān told Walīd to be harsh on Ḥusayn and obtain his oath of allegiance to Yazīd, or kill him on the spot.[143] In addition, some sources add accounts of other scenarios in which Marwān's character appears either equally antagonistic towards Ḥusayn, heedless of his piety and genealogy consciousness, or simply staunchly pro-Umayyad. Among these are an incident prior to the battle, where Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Umar and 'Ā'isha herself both curse Marwān,[144] and another incident after the battle of Karbalā' when the head of Ḥusayn was sent to be displayed in Madīna, the governor of Madīna complained about his having to explain to the Madinese, and Marwān silenced him rather harshly.[145] There is also a section in *al-Kāmil* when, after Marwān told Walīd to kill Ḥusayn, Walīd is reported to have said "all the world is not enough for the blood of Ḥusayn", to which Marwān responded 'you're

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[143] Dīnawarī, 227 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 340 (← Hishām b. Muḥammad ← Abū Mikhnaf); Khwārazmī, 181, 184 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham); al-Kāmil, 14 (n.i.); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 10 (n.i); Tārīkh al-Islam, 4:170 (Jarīr b. Ḥazm ← Muḥammad b. al-Zubayr ← Ruzayq mawlā Mu'āwīya); Majlisī, 44:322 (← al-Mufīd).

[144] Khwārazmī, 171 (← Abū Mansūr Shahrdār b. Shīrūyeh al-Daylamī ← Muhīy al-Sunna Abū al-Fath b. 'Abdullāh ← Abū al-Faraj 'Alī b. Muḥammad ← Abū Bakr ← Abū al-'Abbās Muḥammad b. Isḥāq al-Sirāj ← Qutayba b. Sa'īd ← *man adraka* Marwān b. Ḥakam.

[145] Ibn Sa'd, 84 (← IS); Balādhurī, 217 (n.i.).

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right." The narrator then interjects that although Marwān said this, he did not actually believe it.[146]

Nevertheless, in addition to these references there are also sources that make use of different wording or other linguistic constructions that lead the reader to perceive Marwān's character differently. Apparently these were an attempt to make it appear as though Marwān was not as ready and willing to kill Ḥusayn as other sources portray him as being. Some of these sources insert a parenthetical phrase into the accounts of the event, such that the statement, "then Marwān said to kill Ḥusayn" is presented as, "then Marwān, or someone else, said to kill Ḥusayn."[147] And some sources even rephrase the statement, making use of the passive verb "it was said," making it even further removed from Marwān by not mentioning him by name at all.[148] And, those sources that attempt to remove the blame from Marwān in this way often also include a reference to a correspondence from Marwān addressed to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, similar to that of Walīd's letter, indicating that Ibn Ziyād should not kill Ḥusayn.[149] These accounts attempting to exonerate Marwān are few, however, and most sources tend to characterize Marwān as ready and willing to kill Ḥusayn.

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[146] Al-Kāmil, 16 (n.i.).

[147] Ibn Sa'd, 55 (← IS); Ibn 'Asākir, 207 (← IA-IS); Siyar a'lām, 295 (← SA-IS).

[148] Tārīkh al-Islam, 5:7 (← Ibn Sa'd *min wujūh mutaʿaddida*).

[149] Ibn Sa'd, 62 (← IS); Ibn 'Asākir, 212 (← IA-IS); Siyar a'lām, 304 (← Ibn Sa'd *bi isnādihi*); Tārīkh al-Islam, 5:10 (← Marwān b. Sa'd ← al-Madā'inī ← al-Juwayrīya).

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Pericope	IZB	ISA	BAL	DIN	YAQ	DUL	TAB	KUL	MAS	ISF	TBR	QNU	BAG	KHW	IAS	UGH	KAM	ITA	SIY	TIS	IHJ	MAJ
Walid unwilling to kill Ḥusayn		X		X			X							X	X		X	X	X	X		X
Walid warns Ibn Ziyad not to kill Ḥusayn														X								X
Marwan tells Walid to kill Ḥusayn				X			X							X			X	X		X		X
Ambiguity that exonerates Marwan		X													X				X	X		
Marwan warns Ibn Ziyad not to kill Ḥusayn		X													X				X	X		

Fig. 17. Pericopes of Marwān and Walīd.

Like Walīd, Yazīd's governor at Kūfa prior to the coming of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, Nu'mān b. Bashīr, is another figure that is characterized as unwilling to shed the blood of Ḥusayn. But, unlike Walīd, the characterizations of Nu'mān stress his lacking the bravery to confront Ḥusayn rather than his awareness of Ḥusayn's piety and genealogy consciousness. This appears in most sources in accounts of Nu'mān's reaction to the news that Ḥusayn was coming to Kūfa. These accounts[150] depict Nu'mān's announcement of his neutrality from the pulpit, where he indicated that he would not fight against anyone who did not fight against him. Umayyad spies then confronted him, accusing him of weakness, whereupon he rebutted that weakness was better than having God as your enemy. The spies then informed Yazīd that the situation in Kūfa would soon turn volatile, and Yazīd promptly assigned 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, then governor of Basra, to take the reigns of power at Kūfa as well. In addition to these depictions, there are also several accounts that also stress the piety and genealogy conscious part of Nu'mān's character rather than depicting him as weak. These accounts either describe him as lavishly outfitting the caravan of prisoners on their return back from Damascus to Madīna, or, when Yazīd sought advice as to what to do with the prisoners, Nu'mān

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[150] Dīnawarī, 231 (n.i.); Ṭabarī, 348 (← Zakarīyā b. Yaḥyā al-Ḍarīr ← Aḥmad b. Janāb al-Maṣṣīsī, *yuknā Aba al-Walīd* ← Khālid b. Yazīd b. Asad b. 'Abdullāh al-Qasrī ← 'Ammār al-Duhnī ← Abū Ja'far); Khwārazmī, 197-8 (← Aḥmad b. A'tham) Siyar a'lām, 306 (← Aḥmad b. Janāb al-Maṣṣīsī, ← Khālid b. Yazīd al-Qasrī ← 'Ammār al-Duhnī ← Abū Ja'far al-Bāqir); Ibn Ḥajar, 78 (← 'Ammār b. Mu'āwīya al-Duhnī ← Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Ḥasan , sic.); Majlisī, 44:336 (← al-Mufīd).

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advised him to "do with them as the Prophet would have done."[151] Between these accounts and the other set of accounts mentioning Nu'mān's reluctance to fight against Ḥusayn, we see the sources depicting a figure who was, like Walīd, torn between two mutually contradictory loyalties. One was to the Umayyad establishment that was attempting to eliminate any challenge to its authority, and second was to the piety and genealogy consciousness that pervaded the early Islamic period and made shedding the blood of the grandson of Muḥammad unconscionable. Like Walīd in Madīna, Nu'mān at Kūfa is characterized as having chosen to lean more towards his loyalty to the piety and genealogy conscious aspect of early Islamic character.

Another figure that also seems to fall into this category is 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥakam, the brother of Marwān b. Ḥakam. Unlike his brother, 'Abd al-Raḥmān is mentioned in a few accounts that depict his opposition to the killing of Ḥusayn after the fact. In these depictions he cursed and insulted the killers of Ḥusayn, or appeared sad when the heads were brought to Damascus and presented at the court.[152] There are also two accounts, one in Ṭabarī and another in Ṭabarānī, that indicate specifically 'Abd al-Rahmān b. al-Ḥakam's reaction to the delivery of the heads. In these accounts, 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Ḥakam recited a poem insulting 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād for his impetuous

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[151] Qāḍī Nu'mān, 124 (← Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Abī Ṭālib); al-Kāmil, 87 (n.i.); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 78 (n.i.).

[152] Ibn al-Zubayr, 157 (← Z); Ṭabarī, 465 (← Hishām ← Abū Mikhnaf ← Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī ← 'Abdullāh al-Thumālī ← Qāsim b. Bukhayt).

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decisions and his undiplomatic handling of the crisis with Ḥusayn, whereupon Yazīd beat him in the chest and told him to "Shut up!"[153]

Yet another such figure is ʿAmr b. Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀs, Yazīd's governor at Mecca. The accounts depicting him in a similar fashion include several incidents, both before and after the battle of Karbalā'. In one instance, he is noted to have written a letter of amnesty for Ḥusayn, offering him protection from harm if Ḥusayn came to him at Mecca.[154] When Husayn refused this offer of amnesty and was on his way to ʿIrāq, some sources mention that ʿAmr b. Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀs wrote a letter to ʿUbaydullāh b. Ziyād warning him of Ḥusayn's coming and that he must make his decision carefully.[155] In addition, there are accounts mentioning that after the head was presented to Yazīd at Damascus, he ordered it to be sent to Madīna and put on display, and that when ʿAmr b. Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀs (then governor of Madīna) received the head and his instructions to display it in the mosque, he complained, saying "I wish he had not sent the head to me."[156]

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[153] Ṭabarī, 460 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← Abū Jaʿfar al-ʿAbsī ← Abū ʿUmāra al-ʿAbsī); Ṭabarānī, 461 (← ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ← Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Makhzūmī).

[154] Ibn Saʿd, 59 (← IS); Ṭabarī, 388 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← al-Hārith b. Kaʿb al-Wālibī ← ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn); Ibn ʿAsākir, 209. (← IA-IS)

[155] Ibn Saʿd, 62 (← IS); Ibn ʿAsākir, 212 (← IA-IS).

[156] Ibn Saʿd, 84 (← IS); Balādhurī, 217 (n.i.); Khwārazmī, 2:77 (n.i.). Khwārazmī's account adds an embellishment, indicating that he said. "He [Ḥusayn] raised his sword against us. We were only defending ourselves." Other sources do not mention this.

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In examining these characterizations in relation to each other, we can see that all three governors, at Mecca, Madīna, and Kūfa (prior to the arrival of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād) are depicted as being cautiously against shedding the blood of Ḥusayn b. 'Alī. In spite of this characterization, however, none of them are shown as being willing to stand up to Yazīd or to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād. When these three characterizations are compared to those of 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād, he appears as the only Umayyad governor that was not so unwilling to kill Ḥusayn, and even, in some sources, eager for the opportunity. In this regard, such characterizations serve to displace the responsibility for Ḥusayn's death away from the incidental Umayyad figures, and may even have served to provide 'good' Umayyad counterparts in contrast to the Umayyads demonized by the sources. Such depictions make it appear that even the seemingly pro-Ḥusayn or anti-Umayyad sources are not actually anti-Umayyad, but anti-Yazīd and/or anti-'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād and/or anti-'Umar b. Sa'd. Conversely, as with previous examples of cowardice as a backdrop that serves to contrast later bravery, such depictions of 'good' Umayyads may have been used to provide a contrast for the 'bad' Umayyads who killed Ḥusayn at Karbalā'.

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Pericope	IZB	ISA	BAL	DIN	YAQ	DUL	TAB	KUL	MAS	ISF	TBR	QNU	BAG	KHW	IAS	UGH	KAM	ITA	SIY	TIS	IHJ	MAJ
Nu'man advises Yazid: do as Prophet												X					X	X				
'A.R.b. Ḥakam curses killers of Husayn	X						X															
'A.R.b. Ḥakam criticizes Ibn Ziyad							X				X											
'Amr b.S b. 'As offers to protect Ḥ at Mecca		X					X								X							
'Amr sends letter warning Ibn Ziyad: careful		X													X							
Heads sent to him in Medina, 'Amr complains		X	X											X								

Fig. 18. Pericopes of incidental Umayyad figures.

CHAPTER 6:

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

Throughout the course of this study we have examined a variety of Karbalā' related sources in the light of a number of parameters designed to help us acquire a better understanding of the development of depictions of Karbalā'. Among these, we have identified two basic types of information: that information which is relatively undisputed throughout the entire corpus of sources, and that information upon which the sources disagree dramatically. Chapters two through four were devoted to examining phenomena which the sources more or less agree upon, and which are sometimes also corroborated by non-Karbalā' evidence. The first of these dealt with the existence of some form of piety and genealogy consciousness that pervaded early Islamic society. With regard to Ḥusayn, this was expressed not only by his direct lineage to the Prophet but also in his piety and exemplary Islamic behavior, including some strategically political actions that replicated almost exactly those of his grandfather, the Prophet, and his father, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. It was precisely the prevalence of this consciousness in the society that seems to have served as Ḥusayn's greatest asset against the Umayyads, which he hoped to use to his

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advantage, and which posed the greatest threat to the continuation of the fledgling Umayyad dynasty.

This then led to the subject of the third and fourth chapters, that of the Umayyads' attempts to neutralize the society's awareness of the aura of piety and genealogy consciousness that surrounded Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, and the economic aspects of these Umayyad attempts. It seems to have been impossible for the Umayyads to have neutralized Ḥusayn without first eliminating his base of support at Kūfa and elsewhere. The resulting propaganda campaign began first as political rhetoric labeling Ḥusayn as a 'separatist' to convince the populace to denounce the allegiances that they had already given to Ḥusayn, but then gradually intensified dramatically as the aim became to recruit the very people who had given their allegiances to Ḥusayn to actually bear arms and fight *against* Ḥusayn. And even when rhetorical propaganda failed, the sources depict the Umayyads' employment of 'propaganda of the deed', including economic tactics, bribery, threats, and public executions of Ḥusaynid partisans in order to achieve full cooperation and mobilization against Ḥusayn and his small band of supporters. Unlike the aspects of the Karbalā' narratives discussed in these three chapters, which are agreed upon by the sources, the fifth chapter deals specifically with that part of the Karbalā' narrative upon which the sources disagree: the characterizations of individuals involved in the narratives. It is through the examination of each source's depiction of the individual participants of the Karbalā' narrative that the biases of the authors/compilers of the narratives become

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evident. From a combination of examining these biases in characterizations of individuals, examination of the *isnād* chains of transmission, and the general tones of the narratives in question, we can come to a comprehensive conclusion regarding the actual development, over the centuries, of the perceptions of the battle of Karbalā' among the early Islamic historical sources.

The first clearly identifiable stage in the development of perceptions of the battle of Karbalā' in early Islamic history is that marked by the perceptions formulated and/or transmitted during the Umayyad period, perceptions which the Umayyad dyanasty was eager to neutralize (see epilogue). It is in the Umayyad period, soon after the battle, that oral accounts of the events were transmitted by members of the victorious army. Also, oral accounts of the events leading up to the battle and accounts of the aftermath of the battle were transmitted by the surviving women and children of Ḥusayn's camp who were taken prisoner and marched first to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād in Kūfa, and then to Yazīd himself at Damascus. The spread of these accounts marked the first attempts by members of Ḥusayn's camp, as well as 'Alid supporters not present at Karbalā' and numerous other opponents of the Umayyads (such as Mukhtār b. Abī 'Ubayd al-Thaqafī), to criticize the Umayyad regime and to historicize the battle of Karbalā'. In doing so, they not only reinforced Ḥusayn's aura of piety and geneology consciousness, but also demonized various Umayyad officials by portraying them as the killers of Ḥusayn. Interestingly, many of these accounts appear to place the blame for Ḥusayn's killing not on Yazīd

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himself, but on lesser members of the Umayyad establishment, perhaps reflecting the relatively early date of these accounts. Two factors support this view. First and foremost is that almost immediately after Ḥusayn's death, even high ranking Umayyads began to divert such blame to their lower ranking counterparts.[1] Secondly, overt criticism of high-level Umayyads would have posed a distinct threat to the narrator of such accounts, and a diversion of the blame to lesser figures may have allowed for the account and its narrator to survive.

Furthermore, *isnād* analysis indicates quite clearly that the vast majority of identifiable tradents of the Karbalā' accounts[2] were Kūfan, and/or 'Alid and/or Shī'ī. Such a distribution is no surprise, and is further corroborated by textual evidence in Ṭabarī's accounts of Mukhtār b. Abī 'Ubayd's rebellion of the year 66/685-6, [3] which details Mukhtār's witch-hunt, interrogation, and subsequent execution of individuals involved in killing Ḥusayn at Karbalā'.[4] The *isnād/rijāl* analysis, coupled with the textual evidence in Ṭabarī's accounts of the Mukhtār rebellion, indicates that the

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[1] See chapter 5, on characterizations of Umayyads other than Yazīd.

[2] See the *isnād* analyses of Ibn Sa'd and related sources (pp. 48-57) and those of Abū Mikhnaf and related sources, pp. 197-8). Also, the *isnād* index, indicates the details of complete name, death date, political/sectarian affiliation, place of residence, and any other basic information available for Karbalā' tradents who were identifiable in the classical biographical dictionaries.

[3] See: Ṭabarī, 6:51-66.

[4] This presents yet another aspect of Karbalā' that, in spite of being beyond the scope of this thesis, deserves detailed study.

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vast majority of the information on the battle of Karbalā' which reached the classical Islamic historians (as well as ourselves) actually seem to have originated as isolated accounts that were the responses of individual soldiers to questions posed during Mukhtār's interrogations. Thus, the first tradent in the *isnād* is often a soldier who was present at Karbalā', and the second is likely to be a Kūfan present at Mukhtār's court. This is not as apparent in Ṭabarī's section on the battle of Karbalā' itself, obviously due to Ṭabarī's methods of compiling the accounts, whereby he arranges the accounts in chronological order relative to the Karbalā' narrative and not as responses to the interrogations in the Mukhtār section. Certainly repeating the accounts in both sections would have been redundant, and it is understandable that Ṭabarī would have chosen to summarize Mukhtār's hunt for the soldiers in the army that attacked Ḥusayn, which numbered in the thousands, rather than detailing individual interrogations one by one. He does, however, give the details of major figures such as 'Umar b. Sa'd, and Shimr b. Dhī al-Jawshan.

An additional complication in the *isnād* analysis of accounts of the battle of Karbalā' (or even of Mukhtār's rebellion) is the fact that, aside from Ṭabarī, most of the early sources either cite no *isnād*s for their narratives[5] or provide a 'combined' *isnād* for a constructed narrative, making it impossible to distinguish precisely which information was obtained from which tradent. As Lecker mentions,

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[5] For example, Balādhurī does cite some *isnād*s, but only for isolated accounts outside the main narrative structure. His actual Karbalā' narrative itself has no *isnād*s.

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> We, too, would like to learn about the history of Islam from original reports which have not been tampered with and are free from redaction and 'harmonization.' After all, the CR [combined report] creates an illusion of coherence where there might be dispute, and of consistencey where, in fact, major differences might exist. Generally speaking, the introduction of the CRs is unfortunate from the point of view of the modern historian (the possibly good intentions of their composers notwithstanding) because they blur our perception of the earlier stages of the formation [of the narrative].[6]

We have already analyzed deeply the sources of information of a number of the early Karbalā' related narratives such as Ibn Sa'd's, as well as later narratives including those based on Ibn Sa'd's accounts and others apparently independent of Ibn Sa'd's accounts. But, in spite of Lecker's observations, at least in the case of the Karbalā' narratives the potential for further *isnād* analysis is crippled by the fact that, unlike Lecker's good fortune with accounts of the *sīra*, later sources that do provide *isnāds* often repeat the earlier combined report, and rather than providing individual *isnāds*, repeat the same combined *isnād* from the earlier source. Short of discovering new manuscripts, such circumstances make it impossible to extract potential *isnāds* from other sources on Karbalā' as Lecker has done with a report by Wāqidī. Unlike Lecker's data sets, in which portions of combined reports and uncombined reports were textually similar enough to employ his methods, the Karbalā' sources are not. Fortunately (or, unfortunately) Wāqidī's student, Ibn Sa'd, employed the same methods as his teacher in combining reports. On the one hand, his efforts have resulted in the earliest complete narrative of

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[6] Michael Lecker, "Wāqidī's Account on the Status of the Jews of Medina: A Study of a Combined Report," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 54 (1955): 22.

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the events of Karbalā', which, as this study has shown, later Sunnī sources adopted along with Ibn Sa'd's combined *isnād*.

Although Tabarī provides full *isnāds* for each individual account, many of the tradents of which also appear in Ibn Sa'd's combined *isnād*, Ṭabarī's source is textually so different from Ibn Sa'd's that it is nearly impossible to distinguish which of the *isnāds* provided by Ṭabarī are attributable to which parts of Ibn Sa'd's combined report. Using sheer volume of text to illustrate the disparity between the two sources, Ṭabarī's accounts constitute nearly one hundred and fifty pages of modern printed text, whereas Ibn Sa'd's combined report of the Karbalā' narrative constitutes only thirty pages (a mere one-fifth of Ṭabarī's by volume of text). Even though Ibn Sa'd's combined *isnād* indicates that he relied on reports from many of the same tradents as Ṭabarī did, it appears that Ibn Sa'd's Karbalā' narrative is the result of a cut and paste process that eliminated nearly 80% of the original text. Such a process, by which accounts are summarized into a cohesive narrative has inevitably blurred whatever distinctions may have existed such that differentiation of individual reports and their *isnāds* has become impossible. Nevertheless, although the above limitations posed by the Karbalā' sources make successful implementation of his methods with Wāqidī impossible with the Karbalā' narratives, Lecker's general observations on combined reports are generally valid with regard to the accounts of the battle of Karbalā'.

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With the end of the Umayyad period, we can note a clear shift in the nature of the transmission of information on Karbalā'. Given that accounts of the events of the battle of Karbalā' were perceived as subversive to Umayyad political interests, it is understandable that they would have been transmitted only in private and only orally during the Umayyad period. However, with the 'Abbāsid revolution and the rise of the early Islamic historiographic tradition that followed in the centuries after it, we see that these orally transmitted accounts were beginning to be documented in the historical compilations of the early 'Abbāsid period.

The nature of such accounts, which describe so vividly the division of the community, the disagreement on who was the legitimate candidate for leadership, and their bloody military confrontations, served the early 'Alid and Shī'ī community in legitimizing Ḥusayn's (and thereby their own) authority, and *de*legitimizing the Umayyad dynasty. Interestingly, these accounts, which so effectively served the interests of the Shī'ī community against the Umayyad dynasty, also served the interest of other anti-Umayyad groups, including the 'Abbāsids, and this is perhaps why such '*fitna*' accounts appear so readily throughout numerous 'Abbāsid period Karbalā'-related sources.[7] This phenomenon is accurately described by Donner, when he mentions that the

> 'Abbāsid revolutionary movement, which succeeded in overthrowing the Umayyads in 132/750, arose from the bosom of the Shī'īs, and they subsequently took over the bulk of the Shī 'ī narrative tradition justifying

[7] This is completely understandable, being that such sources were all compiled after the 'Abbāsid revolution.

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> their opposition to Umayyad rule – the core of the *fitna* theme. This they edited slightly, appending a final chapter in which they, the 'Abbāsids, rise, victorious through God's grace, to power and leadership of the Islamic community – at the expense of both Umayyads and 'Alids. This "hijacking" of the substance of the originally Shī 'ī theme of *fitna* was possible because the 'Abbāsids, like the 'Alids, were members of the Prophet's clan of Hāshim. It is in this way that the originally Shī 'ī theme of *fitna* became integrated into the core of the early Islamic ("Sunnī") historiographical tradition, rather than remaining an artifact of merely sectarian interest. It also explains why, in describing the evolution of political leadership in the early Islamic community, classical Sunnī and Shī 'ī historiography of the third century AH and later tell essentially the same story, and differ only in the moral judgements passed on the various participants.[8]

In fact, it appears that although it seemed to be initially in favor of the Shī'īs, the 'Abbāsid incorporation of this largely Kūfan/Shī'ī inspired oral tradition later proved most detrimental to the communal interests of the Shī'īs. Apparently, once the adoption of this theme by the 'Abbāsids became clear, the Shī'īs ceased to use the accounts as a *fitna* theme, but began instead to view it in light of yet another category described by Donner, a "theme of inception."[9] In doing so, Karbalā' came to be viewed not only as historicized battle, but also as the retrospective origination point of the Shī'ī community.[10] Unlike using accounts of the battle of Karbalā' as a *fitna* theme, which defined the confrontation as being specifically between the Ḥusaynid 'Alids and the Umayyad dynasty, the use of the Karbalā' accounts as a theme of inception allowed for

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[8] Donner, *Narratives*, 189-90.

[9] Ibid., 142.

[10] Such narratives could even be considered representative of a boundary theme, or a theme of inception, with the first civil war or earlier.

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the definition of the Ḥusaynid camp (from which the later Shī'ī community descends) to be identified as a community in and of itself, with leadership separate and apart from that of the established government. Thus, the Shī'ī community could achieve its own legitimacy by separating itself not only from the Umayyad dynasty as the original accounts indicate, but from the caliphate in general, whatever the ruling dynasty may be. By way of these new parameters that were clearly a result of the 'Abbāssid incorporation of their *fitna* theme, the Shī'ī community could then define Karbalā' as its origin independent of whoever else may be claiming to be the legitimate authority.

This crucial development in Shī'ī self-definition then led to an apparently deliberate alienation of their one-time allies, the 'Abbāsids. Although the 'Abbāsids were more than happy to incorporate the *fitna* accounts of Karbalā' as a historical tools in the legitimization of their own dynasty over the Umayyads,[11] they were not willing, nor indeed were they able, to utilize such accounts as an inception theme. This new dimension in the development of depictions of the battle of Karbalā' between the 'Abbāsid successors to the Umayyads and the post-'Abbāsid revolution Shī'īs appears to have been at the heart of tensions between the two groups after the revolution, in their rivalry for the caliphate

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[11] For the prime example of an expressly pro-'Abbāsid and anti-Mu'āwiya/Yazīd depiction of the battle of Karbalā', see Mas'ūdī's (d. 346/956) *Murūj al-dhahab*. Also, in terms of literary development, the section on the battle of Karbalā' in Isfahānī's (356/967) *Maqātil al-ṭalibīyyīn* is the first to show a pre-calculated narrative structure, at times clearly *re*-organized by the author.

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And, in the later 'Abbāsid era the affects of this shift appear to have filtered into later established Sunnī perceptions of Ḥusayn and Karbalā' as well. Even in the works of Sunnī authors in this era there is a distinct shift in the portrayals of the events of Karbalā' and in the characterizations of the figures involved. It appears that this shift is a result of the process of incorporating the Shī 'ī *fitna* theme that began with the beginning of the 'Abbāsid dysnasty, and, by this period had become firmly entrenched dogma. Mas'ūdī's (346/956) *Murūj al-dhahab* is the first work that so distinctly expresses pro-'Abbāsid and anti-Umayyad sympathies, as evidenced in part by the inclusion of *ḥadīth*s praising the Prophet's uncle 'Abbās. And, although Ibn Sa'd's was the first combined report, Isfahānī's (356/967) *Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyyīn* is the first source to show blatant manipulation and reconstruction of earlier historical accounts in order to construct a 'cohesive' narrative text, which is often betrayed by the author/compiler's inclusion of his own narrative voice in the text itself. It is also the first to include authorial insertions such as curses (*la'anahullāh*) after mentioning the names of Umayyads, and blessings (*raḥimahullah*) after mentioning the names of Ḥusayn or his family members. Ṭabarānī's (d. 360/970) is the first source to distinguish between Mu'āwiya and Yazīd rather than including them both in the category of 'evil Umayyads'. This distinction between Mu'āwiya as a caliph who ruled by the Qur'ān and the *sunna*, and his corrupt son Yazīd, who did not, may be the first indications of the crystallization of a concept of a 'golden age' of Islam, whose end was marked by the killing of Ḥusayn.

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Also, after the rise of Ismā'īlī power in North Africa and the rise of Būyid power in the central lands, we see in this era the first appearance of actual Shī'ī literary sources. Among these Shī'ī sources, Qāḍī Nu'mān's (d. 365/956) *Sharḥ al-akhbār* is the first Fāṭimī source to appear, giving a distinctly Ismā'īlī characterization of Ḥusayn, and Kulaynī's (d. 329/939) *al-Uṣūl al-kāfī* gives us the first documented twelver Shī'ī perceptions of Ḥusayn. Indeed, this was an era during which the literature on Ḥusayn and Karbalā' flourished. Kulaynī's source is also the first of the literary sources examined in this thesis to express Shī'ī concepts of *naṣṣ* (divinely inspired designation of authority), the *qā'im* (avenger of the rights of the Prophet's family), and *shafā'a* (intercession of the twelve *imām*s on the day of judgement), and the first source to attribute the interpretations of certain Qur'ānic verses as being about Ḥusayn and his battle at Karbalā'. Of course, this is not to say that those concepts did not exist earlier, as some can be dated to the time of al-Ṣādiq (d. 148),[12] and others, such as the concept of *shafā'a* can be traced to explicit references in the Qur'ān. But even these narratives attributed to al-Ṣādiq first appear in the extant literary sources only in Kulaynī's work, and this is a clear indication that by Kulaynī's time these concepts had become not only fully crystallized, but also standard Shī'ī doctrine. Yet another indication of this is that, whereas previous sources may have

[12] See: Marshall G. S. Hodgson, "How Did the Early Shī'a Become Sectarian?" *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 75 (1955): 1-13.

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mentioned simple visitation of Ḥusayn's shrine at Karbalā', Kulaynī includes an entire chapter on the *ziyāra* grave visitation ritual.[13]

Nevertheless, perhaps just as significant as the first appearance of Shī'ī literary depictions of Karbalā' in this era after Fāṭimī Ismā'īlī successes in North Africa and after the rise of Būyid power in the heart of the 'Abbāsid caliphate is the distinct and dramatic change in Sunnī perceptions of Ḥusayn and Karbalā'. In spite of the intense disapproval of the Shī'ī ceremonial rituals, Sunnī perceptions of Ḥusayn himself began to adopt traces of earlier Shī'ī characterizations of Ḥusayn and Karbalā'. Unlike the earlier stage marked by the adoption of the Karbalā' *fitna* theme as an anti-Umayyad tool in the arsenals of early 'Abbāsid era Sunnī sources, this next stage is marked by Sunnī sources that appear towards the end of the 'Abbāsid dynasty and that mimic earlier Shī'ī portrayals stressing Ḥusayn's piety and genealogy consciousness. The literary source that most explicitly encompasses all aspects of this shift is Khwārazmī's (d. 568/1172) *maqtal al-Ḥusayn*. In many ways, this is the work that redefined Karbalā' for both Sunnīs and Shī'īs, for generations to come. Written by a Ḥanafī scholar from Khurāsān in the later 'Abbāsid period, this *maqtal* is a reconstruction of the basic story of Karbalā', but on a scale unprecedented in any earlier work and unmatched (even by Shī'ī scholars) for centuries even after the Mongol conquests. This fact is even more impressive particularly when

[13] The word *ziyāra* has also evolved into a technical term referring to the text to be recited during the *ziyāra* visitation ritual. For more information, see the epilogue, on rituals.

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considering that, from a literary point of view, these were some of the most productive centuries of Islamic scholarship. Nearly every aspect of earlier accounts is included, expanded, and sometimes exaggerated. The work also includes extreme and dramatic characterizations of both sides of the conflict, with demonization of both Yazīd and 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād,[14] and near-hagiographic sanctification of Husayn and his followers to a level unmatched by any source other than the Shī'ī Kulaynī's (329/939) *al-Usūl al-kāfī* over two centuries earlier. Khwārazmī's work is at times so dramatic and its depictions so emotionally charged that its effects were significant not only on Shī'īs but Sunnī perceptions as well. Its effects on later Shī'ī perceptions of Karbalā' are evident in the *Al-luhūf fī qutlā al-ṭufūf*, composed by Ibn Ṭāwūs (d. 664/1265), himself a Twelver Shī'ī. There are also references to a work by a Ḥanbalī scholar in Mosul, 'Abd al-Rāziq al-Ras'anī, whose work entitled *Maṣra' al-Ḥusayn*, is no longer extant and was perhaps destroyed during the Mongol invasions.[15] And, the effects of Khwārazmī's *maqtal* can be seen centuries later, even in the works of staunchly Sunnī scholars such as al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), in the heart of the Umayyads' historical capital.[16] Al-Dhahabī chose for the title of his chapter on Karbalā' two words, '*al-Shahīd al-Ḥusayn*', which is itself

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[14] As mentioned in the chapter on characterizations, most sources blame either one or the other.

[15] We have references it in other works, such as Ibn al-'Imad al-Ḥanbalī's *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab*, v. 5 (Cairo: Maktaba al-Qudsī, 1933), 305-6; also al-Dhahabī's *Kitāb tadhkirat al-ḥuffāẓ*, v. 3 (Hyderabad: Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmānīya, 1958), 1453.

[16] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st edition, "al-Dhahabī," (M. Ben Cheneb).

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indicative of the dramatic difference between the pre-Khwārazmī and post-Khwārazmī Sunnī perceptions of Husayn at Karbalā'. This type of perception of the battle of Karbalā' (i.e., the adoption of earlier Shī 'ī perceptions) appears to have continued among the post-Būyid Sunnī community well after the Mongol invasions, and into the Middle Periods of Islamic history.

The beginning of the final major stage in the historical development of perceptions of Karbalā' and Ḥusayn, and perhaps the one which modern Shī'īsm is most a product and reflection of, is one that corresponds precisely to the beginning of the Shī'ī Safavid dynasty in Iran. Chelkowski states that, "The first year of Shī'īte Safavid rule coincides with the writing of the most important book on the sufferings and death of Ḥusayn, written in AD 1501 [906-7AH] by Ḥusayn Vāiz Kāshifī under the title *Rawzat al-Shuhadā* (sic.) or, the garden of martyrs."[17] As we shall see, the *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'* is a striking example of the powerful relation between history, popular culture, literature, and politics. Though based on the historical incident at Karbalā', the work itself is a gross overdramatization of actual facts, and was explicitly aimed at eliciting emotional responses to its presentation of extreme tragedy. Moreover, it appears to have been the official Safavid version (however inaccurate) of the Karbalā' narrative, which was divided into ten chapters, portions of which were specified to be read during the first ten nights of Muḥarram annually throughout the Safavid domain. Even the modern Persian

[17] Peter J. Chelkowski, *Ta'ziyeh: Ritual Drama in Iran* (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 256.

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term for recounting the Karbalā' narrative during the 'Āshūrā' commemorations is "*rawzeh khwānī*" (reading/reciting the *rawzeh*) referring to Kāshifī's book, the Persian pronunciation of which is *Rawzeh-ye shuhadā*.[18] Today, the verb "*rawzeh khwānī* and its active participle, "*rawzeh khwān*", have come to mean generically, 'recitation of the Karbalā' narrative' and 'a reciter of the Karbalā' narrative', respectively, and have lost completely their original association with the official Safavid textbook on Karbalā' written by Kāshifī.[19] Indeed, the fact that the historical phenomenon led to the formation of a popular word that has become part and parcel of the Persian language to this day is a testament to the influence of Kāshifī's *Rawḍat al-shuhadā'*.

It is also during the Safavid era that another representative source that is of major significance to this study, Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī's (d. 1111/1698) *Biḥār al-anwār*, was compiled. This work is highly significant for a number of reasons. Not only is it the most comprehensive Shī'ī encyclopedia ever to have been compiled, but the fact that it includes information compiled from every source available to Majlisī at the time makes it an invaluable reflection of Middle Period perceptions of Karbalā'. Furthermore, in addition to filling a gap of nearly half a millennium of post-Mongol depictions of Karbalā', the fact that *Biḥār al-anwār*'s depictions of Ḥusayn and Karbalā' are nearly identical to the perceptions of modern Shī'īs makes *Bihār al-anwār* the source that marks

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[18] Tehrānī, *al-Dharī'a,* 11:294-295.

[19] Few Persian speakers, including the supposedly scholarly class of *mullās*, are even aware of the etymology of this word and its association with Kāshifī's book.

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the final stage in over a millennium of continually changing perceptions of Ḥusayn and Karbalā'. In this final stage we see a Ḥusayn radically different from any previous characterizations of him in the sources. The Ḥusayn depicted in *Biḥār al-anwār* is an almost messianic figure, working super-human miracles such as curing the blind with his saliva, regenerating people's dismembered limbs, and even bringing the dead back to life![20] *Biḥār al-anwār*'s Husayn had, in many ways, become more saintly than saints, and more prophetic than even his grandfather, the Prophet. The popularity of such views of the Shī'ī *imām* in Safavid Iran can be attributed not only to Safavid financing and administrative support, but also to the historical presence in Persian society strong currents of mysticism in the centuries prior to Majlisī. When examined in the context of numerous other works[21] that had already become nearly canonical for Sūfīs, there can be no doubt that the popularity and mass appeal of mystics earlier in the history of the Iranian highlands only helped to foster this tendency of raising Ḥusayn up beyond the human sphere.[22] Chelkowski also notes that,

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[20] The similarity between this perception of Ḥusayn and some biblical narratives describing the miraculous powers of Jesus are startling, and could serve as the subject of a study in itself.

[21] Perhaps the most famous example is Muhammad b. Ibrāhīm Farīd al-Dīn Aṭṭār's *Tadhkirat al-awlīyā'*, ed. Reynold A. Nicholson (London: Luzac, 1905). Others include Abū al-Barakāt 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī's *Nafaḥāt al-'ins* (cairo: al-Azhar al-Sharīf, 1989) as well as Sadīd al-Dīn Muḥammad Ghaznavī's *Maqāmāt-e Shaykh Ahmad Zendeh Pīl* (Tehran: Bungāh-i Tarjumah va Nashr-i Kitāb, 1961).

[22]See: Roy P. Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1985), 144; see also Ignac Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, ed. S. M. Stern, (Chicago: Aldone Publishing Co., 1968), 2:294.

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> While tradition kept alive the memory of Hussein, his character attained a mythical entity in the minds of his followers. Hussein became a sacred hero, who, after his death, reached the frontier of eternal values. Through the language of the poet his mourners, as we shall see, made him immortal, and the role of the myth began to manifest itself from within the ritual of mourning which itself became a kind of worship. [23]

In fact, there is evidence suggesting that at a very early stage in the development of this super-human perception of Husayn, the Shī'ī *'ulamā'* scholarly class recognized the potential power of this new perception and the new mourning rituals that it fostered. They saw that the phenomenon could be used to establish and propagate a new communal Shī'ī identity that distinguished itself as separate and apart from the earlier Shī'ī views that had by then become adopted by mainstream Sunnīsm. In an attempt to distinguish themselves from the Sunnīs that had in the post Būyid era adopted Ḥusayn as one of the closest *ṣahābī*s and embued him with an aura of great respect, the Shī'ī *'ulamā'* in the Safavid period adopted and endorsed an extremely hagiographic perception of Ḥusayn, in addition to a number of new commemoration rituals that not only grew out of this new perception, but that also perpetuated and fostered it.

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[23] Chelkowski, 97.

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EPILOGUE:

THE DEVELOPMENT OF KARBALĀ' COMMEMORATION RITUALS AND SHĪ'Ī IDENTITY

Alongside with and parallel to this development in literary depictions of the battle of Karbalā', during the past fourteen centuries the Shī'ī community has developed an elaborate range of rituals for the commemoration of the events of Karbalā', all or some of which are performed in different Shī'ī communities worldwide. *Majālis*, *nīyāḥa*, *rawzeh khwānī*, *laṭmīya*, and ceremonial processionals are but a few examples of ritual events during the Muharram commemorations that no Shī'ī community ignores (even here in Chicago). The Muharram *majālis* (gatherings) occur every evening beginning on the first night of Muharram and lasting until the tenth night. These always include *rawzeh khwānī* (recitation of Karbalā' narratives) interrupted at emotional moments by *nīyāḥa* (recitation of rhythmic lamentation poetry). The *nīyāha* is accompanied by *laṭmīya* (chest-beating) and has a hypnotizing effect, until it is itself interrupted by the *rawzeh khwān* (reciter of the narrative) before the participants beat themselves too heavily. This interplay between emotional peaks of narrative recitation and peaks of physical rapture continues intermittently throughout the *majlis*. Although the *rawzeh khwānī* is a ritual specific to

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the context of the Muḥarram *majlis*, the *nīyāḥa* and *latmīya* are also practiced during the ceremonial march, which occurs only on the tenth day of Muḥarram, just before noon. Examples of regional rituals not universal to Shī'īs internationally are the *zanjīl* (swinging chains linked together at one end, used in Iran), chest beating while holding razor blades between the fingers (Pakistan), and striking the skull with a sword ('Irāq and Lebanon). Another ritual that is sometimes included in the commemoration ceremonies is the *ta'ziyeh* [1] dramatic re-enactment of some of the events of Karbalā'. Unlike the others in this broad range of rituals that has evolved over time, this is the only one that does not require communal participation on an active level. Rather, it is a dramatic recreation, often entirely in verse, of selected scenes of the events of Karbalā' which are viewed passively by the spectators. Interestingly enough, this dramatic performance is sometimes excluded from the commemoration ceremonies altogether, while the other rituals are considered an integral part of the Muḥarram commemorations. For some reason, most Western scholarship on Karbalā' and Ḥusayn focuses on the *ta'ziyeh* performance, and rather than being written by historians of Islam, most of the works on these rituals by Western scholars, are written by historians of world drama, cultural anthropologists, or sociologists intrigued by what they see as the (Shī'ī) Muslim equivalent of the Christian passion play. This has resulted in a corpus of literature that

[1] It is important to note that this word carries different meanings in different languages. While in Arabic it denotes commemorative mourning, this paper will make use of the word in its Persian meaning (referring to dramatic recreations of the events of Karbalā') as most of the English language scholarship on this topic does.

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focuses on a single relatively minor Karbalā'-related ritual, while practically ignoring the many other rituals that the Shī'ī community itself considers much more integral, and more importantly, ignoring the development of these rituals and their significance in establishing or reinforcing Shī'ī communal identity.

In terms of the development of these rituals in early Islamic history, we can see that, in addition being the period representing the beginnings of oral transmission of accounts of the battle of Karbalā', the Umayyad period is also marked by several events that seem to represent the historical origins of Shī'ī rituals that were later to become integral parts of the Karbalā' commemoration ceremonies, and aimed at reinforcing communal Shī'ī identity. Some sources mention that upon their return from Yazīd's court at Damascus back to Madīna, the prisoners of Ḥusayn's camp insisted on taking a route which would take them via Karbalā' once again, in order to pay their respects to the grave of Ḥusayn before returning home.[2] They reportedly reached Karbalā' forty days after the battle and were surprised to see that a number of people were already gathered there mourning Ḥusayn. Ḥusayn's sister Zaynab is then reported to have praised Ḥusayn, cursed his killers, and recited such a moving oration that she brought even the Umayyad

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[2] While Ṭabarī, 470 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jundub al-Azdī) mentions that this first *ziyāra* was performed by a single individual and Kulaynī has an entire chapter on ritual grave visitation, Khwārazmī, 2:39 (← Abū Mikhnaf) and al-Kāmil, 87 (n.i.) indicate that this mourning occurred on the way to Kūfa, as the Prisoners passed Ḥusayn's decapitated corpse. Ibn Ṭāwūs, 55 (n.i.) mentions the above account, as well as another account on p. 82 (n.i.) of visitation of Ḥusayn's grave on the way back from Damascus to Madīna. This account also finds its way into Majlisī's *Biḥār*, 45:146 (← Ibn Ṭāwūs).

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troops guarding them to tears. Whether real or a retrospective construction, this appears to represent the first reference to communal gathering mourning the death of Ḥusayn. This forty-day post mortem commemoration has become a ritual, commonly referred to as the *arba'īn*, which is a practice that has continued in the Shī'ī community to this day. However, the first instance in the historical sources that indicates an *annual* commemoration of Ḥusayn's death appears to be the historical records of the *tawwābūn* (repenters).[3] Apparently, a number of Kūfans and other figures are portrayed as having regretted not being able to support Ḥusayn at Karbalā'. These 'repenters' gathered at Karbalā' on the first anniversary of the killing of Ḥusayn, and at his gravesite, mourned his loss, regretted not fighting alongside him, and recited poetry praising Ḥusayn's virtues and cursing his killers and agreed to reunite at a future time in order to attack Umayyad forces. Several years later they reportedly met at Karbalā' again, and after praying to God and seeking forgiveness, these *tawwābūn*, numbering four thousand, marched off to fight the Umayyads at 'Ayn al-Warda, on the 'Irāqī-Syrian border. Examples such as the above references to mourners visiting Ḥusayn's gravesite seem to be the historical-literary roots of what would later become a highly ritualized aspect of the Muḥarram comemmoration ceremonies: *ziyāra* (ritual grave visitation).

Another aspect of the Karbalā' commemoration rituals that appears specifically in the early sources is that of *laṭm* (beating of the chest, head, or face). Although the *laṭm* in

[3] See: Ṭabarī, 5:573-609.

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such references is clearly a primitive emotional reaction to the loss of a loved one, these early references nevertheless suggest possible historical beginnings for what was later to become a highly formalized ritual. In the same sources that indicate the prisoners' visitation of Ḥusayn's gravesite on their way home to Madīna, there are references indicating that when the women saw the grave of Ḥusayn on the sands of Karbalā', they beat their chests and faces and wailed aloud.[4] As with the first references to grave visitation by the family of Ḥusayn, such reactions of grief as identified in the sources appear only natural, and are even prevalent among mourners of numerous cultures in the region to this day. Nevertheless, it seems that generations later highly ritualized rhythmic chest beating rituals eventually evolved from these natural reactions to the loss of a loved one or to the sight of the grave of a deceased family member.

In fact, in the centuries between the post-Karbalā' primitive grieving rites and the development of highly ceremonial mourning rituals, the mere fact that the memory of Ḥusayn and his battle was preserved by the annual commemoration of the tenth of Muharram, the anniversary of the battle of Karbalā', is what allowed for the evolution of the ceremonial rituals centuries later. In the early Umayyad period such commemorations appear to have been relatively small and private affairs among the Shī'ī and 'Alid communities, and often convened in the home of the Shī'ī *imām*, or another influential

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[4] Ṭabarī, 470 (← Abū Mikhnaf ← 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jundub al-Azdī); Khwārazmī, 2:39 (← Abū Mikhnaf); al-Kāmil, 87 (n.i.); Ibn Ṭāwūs, 55, 82 (n.i.); Majlisī, 45:p 146 (← Ibn Ṭāwūs).

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figure in the locality.[5] It seems that the sentiments of the politically-dominant Umayyads against the commemoration of Ḥusayn's death, for obvious reasons, prevented any possibility of public commemorations, and, moreover, there appear to have been efforts on the parts of the Umayyad dynasty to actually neutralize the commemoration of 'Āshūrā' by the Muslim populace. In fact, historical sources even indicate that, during the reign of the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (65-86/685-705) Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī went so far as to institute a special festive holiday on the day of 'Āshūrā'.[6] Al-Ḥajjāj's institution of a joyful festival on the anniversary of Ḥusayn's killing and decapitation only a few short years earlier may have been a counteraction to what may seems to have become an increasingly disturbing trend during the reign of 'Abd al-Malik: annual gatherings mourning the plight of Ḥusayn at the hands of the Umayyads. These annual gatherings during 'Āshūrā' appear to have kept the memory of Ḥusayn alive not only in terms of commemorating the anniversary of his battle and subsequent death, but also by perpetuating the oral transmission of accounts of the battle, the events leading up to it, and its aftermath. Considering the Umayyad sentiment against any remembrance of Ḥusayn, and the Umayyad suppression of 'Alid movements, the lack of any

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[5] Ibrāhīm al-Ḥaydarī, *Trājīdīyā Karbalā': Sūsiyūlūjīyā al-Khiṭāb al-Shī'* (London: Dār al-Sāqī, 1999), 52.

[6] Maqrīzī notes that the Ayyūbīs reinstituted this festive practice in a deliberate attempt to replace the Fāṭimī commemoration of 'Āshūrā' as a day of mourning. See: Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-mawā'iẓ: al-i'tibār bi dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa al-āthār*, v. 1 (Baghdad: Maktabat al-Muthannā, 1970), 490. (Henceforth: al-Maqrīzī).

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documented written accounts of the battle in this period is completely understandable. Moreover, the fact that what few Umayyad historical sources that do exist involve the history of the Prophet,[7] seem to indicate the Umayyads' attempts at legitimation, whereby they reinforce their own piety by stressing the life of the Prophet and, by default, downplaying the internecine confrontations that occurred after his death.

Moreover, it seems that the primitive commemoration ceremonies and grave visitation rituals that began in the Umayyad period had gained popularity partially, if not in large part, due to the 'Abbasids' own promotion of Ḥusayn and Karbalā' in their anti-Umayyad polemics. The historical sources indicate that Ḥusyan's gravesite at Karbalā' was by the third/ninth century so popular, and apparently, the commemoration of his battle and death was so moving to the masses of visitors, that the 'Abbāsid caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 232-47/847-61) destroyed the shrine of Ḥusayn, razed Karbalā' to the ground, and banned visitation of the site upon pain of death.[8] Though we do not have but a few textual references to this in the historical sources, the lack of elaboration in Abbāsid era texts actually speaks volumes. The significance of this act on the part of the 'Abbāsid caliph can not be overlooked. On one level, it indicates the extent to which ritual visitation of Ḥusayn's shrine at Karbalā' had developed by that time, a possible indication

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[7] See Donner, "The Problem of Early Arabic Historiography in Syria," in *Proceedings of the Second Symposium on the History of Bilād al-Shām*, ed. Muḥammad 'Adnān Bakhīt (Amman: n.p., 1987), 1-25.

[8] See: *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, "Karbalā'," (L. Veccia Vaglieri); also, al-Kāmil, 4:375.

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of the *ziyāra* grave visitation ritual. On another level, it seems to be an indication of the above-mentioned discrepancy that developed in the different points of view between the 'Abbāsids and the 'Alids with regard to Karbalā'. While 'Abbāsid interpretations of Ḥusayn's battle at Karbalā' was that it was an anti-Umayyad battle, al-Mutawakkil's destruction of Ḥusayn's shrine and ban on its vistation, coupled with the Shī'ī shift from using Karbalā' as a *fitna* theme to using it as a theme of inception legitimizing their own authority, indicates that Shī'ī comemmorations of Karbalā' had by then acquired anti-government connotations that were threatening to the 'Abbāsids as well.

Also, on yet another level, such references to the 'Abbāsid caliph's destruction of Ḥusayn's shrine at Karbalā' may also be indicative of the beginnings of architectural developments that may be traced back to Karbalā'. Although, architecturally speaking, the precise nature of Ḥusayn's shrine at Karbalā' during al-Mutawakkil's reign is unclear, it is clear that there *was* some sort of shrine structure there that he could destroy. And, even more importantly, it seems that Ḥusayn's gravesite, and the shrine structure that was subsequently built there eventually led to a natural population of the area, as with numerous historical examples of shrine and city-formation in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic Near East. Evidence has shown that, with the establishment of a local shrine, however small, visitation by pilgrims and various other economic and demographic factors often creates an environment that allows the shrine site to develop into a small

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village, and then continue to expand until it becomes a shrine-city.[9] Among the many such factors are the wide array of products and services that develop around the shrine to cater to the visiting pilgrims, including foodservice, lodging, transportation, souvenirs, and even loitering beggars, and, as the number of visitors to the shrine increases, so does the economy revolving around the shrine. Architecturally, the increased economic activity around the shrine and the expansion of the shrine city also leads to an expansion of the structure of the shrine itself, increasing in grandeur and acquiring numerous annexes, sometimes including a *madrasa* (school), library, *musāfirkhāneh* (guesthouse for visitors) and sometimes even a hospital. This latter phenomenon of associating healing powers with the saint of the shrine is among the most interesting factors deserving further study. It appears to be related to the development of the concept of *shafā'a* (intercession), which was often sought from Ḥusayn by later Shī'īs. Moreover, aside from the anti-government political aspect of the rise of Karbalā' as an urban center, the rise of the city's socio-economic influence may have also posed a threat to Mutawakkil's new capital at Sāmarrā'.[10]

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[9] See: J. R. Cole, "'Indian Money' and the Shī'ī Shrine Cities of Iraq, 1786-1850," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 22 (1986), 461-80; D. M. Donaldson, "The Shrine Colleges of Meshed," *Muslim World*, 16 (1926), 72-78; R. D. McChesney, *Waqf in Central Asia: Four Hundred Years in the History of a Muslim Shrine, 1480-1885* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

[10] See: T.M. al-Amid, *The 'Abbāsid Architecture of Sāmarrā' in the Reigns of Both al-Mu'tasim and al-Mutawakkil* (Baghdād, n.p., 1973); Directorate General of Antiquities, *Bāb al-Ghayba (Door of Disparition) at Sāmarrā'* (Baghdād: Government Press, 1940); J. M. Rogers, "Sāmarrā', A Study in Medieval Town Planning," *The Islamic City: a Colloquium*, edited by A. Hourani and S. M. Stern (Oxford: Bruno

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Such architectural and demographic developments at Karbalā' are clear indications that the simple acts of visitation initiated in the Umayyad period and popularized in the 'Abbāsid period had by this time developed into something much more ritualized than merely visitation of a grave. This is corroborated by the textual evidence in Kulaynī's *al-Kāfī*, which include instructions for a much more formulaic ritual that involved the recitation of a specific, almost liturgical text, in a very specific manner, with highly ritualized motions and sayings to be uttered at the entrance to Ḥusayn's shrine, and at the foot of Ḥusayn's grave, and at the head of his grave, etc. Thus, visiting Ḥusayn's shrine had by Kulaynī's era developed into an elaborate ritual that involved not only symbolic physical movements, but also a very precisely defined oration to be recited exactly as prescribed. The combination of literal oration, physical positioning in relation to the grave of Ḥusayn, and the symbolism of gestures and recitation show that the ritual had thus almost achieved the religious status of a liturgical prayer.[11]

Nevertheless, there are other historical references to commemoration rituals affirming Shī'ī identity that corroborate evidence in the Karbalā'-related sources indicating a shift in perceptions of Ḥusayn and Karbalā'. Among these are the first

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Cassirer, 1970), 119-56.

[11] In addition, the formalization and ritualization of reciting the text allowed for the actual reading of the text itself to be perceived as a separate ritual altogether, and it appears that recitation of the text in itself became a satisfactory alternative for actual presence at Karbalā'. Interestingly, this in itself has developed a high degree of ritualization, including certain ritual aspects such as standing, facing the direction of Karbalā' (as Mecca is faced in prayers), and bowing the head. For details, see: Kulaynī's chapter on *ziyāra*.

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historical references to *public* mourning ceremonies and commemoration processions. However, just as the early 'Abbāsids used the Karbalā' narratives as a *fitna* theme but rejected its use as a theme of inception, the heightened level of honor and respect that was afforded Ḥusayn easily infiltrated into mainstream Sunnī sources of this period, but the new public commemoration rituals marking Karbalā' as the central symbol of Shī'ī identity were not so welcomed by the dominant Sunnī culture. The first historical reference to a public procession on the day of 'Āshūrā' appears in the entry for the year 352/963 in Ibn Kathīr's a*l-Bidāya wa al-nihāya*. Ibn Kathīr indicates that,

> On the tenth of Muḥarram of this year, Mu'izz al-Dawla Ibn Būyeh, may God disgrace him, ordered that the markets be closed, and that the women should wear coarse woolen hair cloth, and that they should go into the markets with their faces uncovered/unveiled and their hair disheveled, beating their faces and wailing over Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. The people of the *Sunna* could not prevent this spectacle because of the large numbers of the Shī'īs and because of their increasing prominence, and because the Sultan was on their side.[12]

For the next year Ibn Kathīr includes an entry stating, "On the tenth of Muḥarram this year the Shī'īs celebrated the '*azā'* of Ḥusayn as they did the year before. The Shī'īs and Sunnīs fought violently among each other on this day, and much property was looted." Over the next several years, similar entries for the Muḥarram ceremonies appear, with the author making note of increasing tensions and violence until the end of the Būyid regime and the rise of the Saljūqs. Ten years later, he includes a remarkable entry describing the

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[12] Ismā'īl b. 'Umar Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa al-nihāya,* v. 11 (Beirut: Maktabat al-Ma'ārif, 1990), 243. (Henceforth: Ibn Kathīr).

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Muḥarram procession for that year, which he describes as a 'despicable innovation'. It seems, however, that the religious symbolism of Karbalā' began to affect even the Sunnīs of Baghdad, and they began to adopt a set of religious symbols of their own, resulting in a sort of historical recreation. In his entry for the year 363/973 Ibn Kathīr states,

> In this year on 'Āshūrā', the despicable innovation was celebrated according to the custom of the Shī'īs. A great riot broke out between the Sunnīs and the Shī'īs, both parties being of little *'aql*. A group of Sunnīs placed a woman on a camel and called her 'Ā'isha, and someone took the name Ṭalḥa, and someone took the name Zubayr, and they said "we are going out to fight the followers of 'Alī! Many people on both sides were killed. [13]

This is not only a remarkable historical reference indicating the level to which the 'Āshūrā' procession had developed under the Būyids, but also an indication of its use as a symbol of the Shī'īs' communal identity as separate and distinct from the Sunnī community. Moreover, this particular reference is an indication of just how defensive of their own identity such developments made the Sunnī community, and and indication of an increasingly dangerous dichotomy of symbolic representation with lethal consequences.

Unlike the apparent mass appeal found in references to the Shī'ī rituals in 'Irāq, the Fāṭimīs were not as successful in their introduction of Shī'ī commemoration rituals[14]

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[13] Ibid., 253.

[14] For general information, see: Paula Sanders, *Ritual, politics, and the City in Fatimid Cairo*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994) chapter 4, on the New Year's ceremony and chapter 6, on the Ghadīr Khumm ceremonial.

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in Cairo. There are historical references indicating that in the year 363/973 al-Mu'izz li Dīn-Allāh sponsored a large procession, including some infantry and cavalry units that passed by the shrines of Kulthūm and Nafīsa reciting dirges and mourning the death of Ḥusayn. Their subsequent march to the market, breaking articles of merchandise and cursing those who conducted business on the day of 'Āshūrā' nearly led to rioting and bloodshed.[15] Soon thereafter, Sunnī groups began to exhibit violence towards the Shī'īs at the shrines on the day of Āshūrā, and in the year 396/1005 tensions in Cairo on 'Āshūrā' were such that a Shī'ī was physically attacked and decapitated, and afterwards, the official Fāṭimī 'Āshūrā' commemorations in Cairo consisted of not more than simply mourning and reciting poetry in the mosques, which was more amenable to Sunnī participation.[16] In both cases we see that the majority Sunnī community condoned and sometimes even participated in honoring and mourning Ḥusayn, but neither participated in, nor even tolerated the public processional commemoration of 'Āshūrā' and the symbolism of Shī'ī communal identity that pervaded it. Moreover, this intolerance for such processional commemoration full of Shī'ī symbolism appears to have resulted in numerous clashes and fatalities.

In an attempt to distinguish themselves from the Sunnīs that had in the post Būyid era adopted Ḥusayn as one of the closest *ṣaḥābī*s and embued him with an aura of great

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[15] al-Maqrīzī, 429-30.

[16] Ibid., 431.

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respect, the Shī'ī *'ulamā'* in the Safavid period adopted and endorsed an extremely hagiographic perception of Ḥusayn, in addition to a number of new commemoration rituals that not only grew out of this new perception, but that also perpetuated and fostered it. One example of just such a ritual is the *shabīh*, or *ta'ziyeh* dramatic performance of the events of the battle of Karbalā'. It is not only a ritual for which a specific architectural structure had been developed,[17] but it is also clearly a ritual that is completely unattested to in the early historical sources. The practice appears to have originated in Ṣafavid Iran, and it is a ritual that had achieved, almost from its inception, tremendous mass appeal among the common classes, and that is perhaps why the Ṣafavid dynasty and its *'ulamā'* were so keen to encourage it. Numerous European travelers have noted this, including Sir Arthur Pelly, who noted that, "if the success of a drama is to be measured by the effects which it produces upon the people for whom it is composed, or upon the audiences before whom it is presented, no play has ever surpassed the tragedy known in the Mussulman world as that of Hasan and Husain [sic.]."[18]

Perhaps its origins and subsequent popularity in Iran can both be explained by the literary and dramatic history of pre-Islamic Iran. Yarshater has identified a number of well-known tragedies in the Iranian dramatic tradition which exhibit characteristics

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[17] S. R. Petersen, "The Ta'ziyeh and Related arts," in *Ta'ziyeh*, 64-84; Mohammad A. Faique, *A complete Study of Persian Drama: 1906-1995* (Delhi: Nice Books, 1999).

[18] Sir Lewis Pelly, *The Miracle Play of Hasan and Husayn*, v. 1 (London: Wm. H. Allen, 1879), preface.

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remarkably parallel to the *ta'ziyeh* dramatic performances. One is "The Memorial of Zārer," a work that can be traced back from Middle Persian, through the Sasanian period, to an ancient Parthian original,[19] and a second is the famous ancient Persian legend of Siyāvūsh.[20] Yarshater indicates quite clearly that,

> The ritual mourning festivals of the Ta'ziyeh type have clear precedents in pre-Islamic Persia. The passion of Siyavush bears too close a resemblance to the Ta'ziyeh of the Imam [Ḥusayn] in ritual, imagery, and emotive underpinnings to be ignored in an explanation of the emergence of the genre. Whereas Zarer's elegiac epic may be considered Zoroastrian in conception, the funerary rites of Siyavush pre-date the Zoroastrian reform and belong, like many other old practices and beliefs, to the pagan traditions of eastern Iran. [21]

Not surprisingly, the practice was severely criticized by leading (non-Ṣafavid) Shī'ī *'ulamā'* scholars, citing the impropriety of personification of the Shī'ī *imām* Ḥusayn, the indecency of men dressing as women to perform the roles of Ḥusayn's *ahl al-bayt*, and the fact that the acting troupes were more popular among the audience than the message of Karbalā' itself. Nevertheless, the popularity of the performances among the common masses eventually led less powerful scholars to buckle under the pressure of the populace.[22] More powerful scholars who might have had the credibility to enforce their

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[19] Ehsan Yarshater, "Ta'ziyeh and pre-Islamic mourning rites in Iran", in *Ta'ziyeh*, 89.

[20] Ibid., 93.

[21] Ibid., 93.

[22] Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shī'īs of Iraq* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 156-7.

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rulings saw the potential for such ritual commemoration performances for reinforcing the new Shī'ī communal identity and manipulated what shall be termed here the 'commercialization of Karbalā'' in what they saw as their own interests, and the interests of a stronger, more popular Shī'ī community defined and driven by powerful Karbalā' symbolism and imagery.[23]

A number of other recently developed rituals that are similar to the *shabīh* performances both in their lack of any precendent in the early historical sources and in their controversy among Shī'ī scholars over their legality include the violent blood-shedding rituals of *taṭbīr* (repeatedly hitting one's skull with a sharp sword) and the ritual use of the *zanjīl* (striking one's chest and back with swinging chains, with or without sharp blades attached). Although *laṭm* (slapping or beating one's bare hand to the head or chest) has been shown to have a historical basis for its later ritual development, nowhere in the early historical sources does self-inflicted bloodshed ever appear. Interestingly, despite the fact that Kulaynī includes an entire chapter on the grave visitation ritual, Kulaynī does not even mention chest-beating, which is an indication that the chest-

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[23] Modern analyses of the *ta'ziyeh* plays supports this view. William Beeman in his "Cultural Dimensions of Performance conventions in Iranian Ta'ziyeh" indicates that the plays had no other purpose than to "strengthen the faith of the people by condensing and intensifying religious events in such a manner that the heart-rending juices of the play are extracted and trickled drop by drop onto the palates of the expectant spectators." See: *Ta'ziyeh*, 23. Also, because there is no new information presented at the performances and because the audience is already very familiar with the plot, it is clear that the performances are not designed to do anything but "reinforce for the members of the audience in a particularly effective manner the important aspects of their cultural, ideological, and religious tradition," *Ta'ziyeh*, 29.

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beating rituals must have been a much later phenomenon. Based upon this, it is not unreasonable to come to the conclusion that the blood-shedding rituals must have been developed even later than that. Even according to elder Shī'ī scholars, the rituals of self-flagellation with swords, knives, and chains was introduced to the shrine cities in the early nineteenth century by non-Arab participants in the annual commemoration ceremonies, notably Persians and Qizilbāsh Turks.[24] As with the legal controversy over the dramatic theatrical personification of Ḥusayn, notable Shī'ī scholars such as Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn decreed the illegality of inflicting bodily harm and shedding one's own blood for Ḥusayn. In support of his position he noted the late introduction of the blood-shedding rituals to the annual commemoration ceremonies in the shrine cities and quoted great Ayatullāhs in the past, such as Muḥammad Ḥasan Shīrāzī (d. 1312-3/1895) who decreed that the ritual was a sin! He himself was quoted as saying, "Only laymen observed the ritual, imposing their will on the *'ulamā'* who were too weak to prevent the spread of the practice."[25] As with other unconventional and legally controversial innovated rituals, powerful members of the *'ulamā'* class who saw the opportunity to reinforce the memory and symbolism of the blood of Ḥusayn and to gain popular support for the new Shī'īsm (and thereby for themselves) legalized the innovated blood-shedding rituals and encouraged them in the interests of their own religio-political agenda.

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[24] Nakash, 148.

[25] Nakash, 156.

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Another similar example of such an innovated ritual encouraged and perpetuated by the Ṣafavid Shī'ī *'ulamā'* is the ritual of corpse transport, and the subsequent traffic in corpses that had a major economic impact on both the Ottoman and the Ṣafavid empires.[26] Mythically based on the alleged transport of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib's buried corpse from its original grave to a new gravesite in the city of Najaf, sometime in the middle periods Shī'īs began transporting the corpses of their dead for burial at Najaf, Karbalā', and other shrine cities. An explosion of corpse trafficking reached levels unprecedented in history after the mass-conversion of Iranians to Shī'īsm in the sixteenth century and "the corpse traffic reached its peak in the late nineteenth century and became an integral part of a whole set of rituals, visitations, and religious practices that helped ensure the welfare of Najaf and Karbalā', as well as their ties with their hinterland and other parts of the Shī'ī world."[27] In fact, the shrine cities of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and his son Ḥusayn were so popular and so many corpses were transferred there, that "much of the recently built areas of the two cities were on old cemeteries that sank with time."[28] As with previous examples of scholarly opposition to rituals with no historical basis, Shī'ī scholars such as

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[26] The popularity of this ritual resulted in imposition of corpse import taxes, duties, tariffs, license and other service charges by the Ottomans who controlled the shrine cities, and similar export taxes, licenses and other fees levied by the Ṣafavids. Also, once the Ṣafavids saw the economic potential of the 'Irāqi shrine cities, they began a vigourous campaign to promote the shrine of the sixth Shī'ī *imām*, Riḍā, at Mashhad (Iran), in an attempt to prevent the drain of financial resources out of the empire and into the hands of their arch-enemies, the Ottomans.

[27] Nakash, 187.

[28] Nakash, 188.

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Hibat al-Dīn Shahristānī criticised the ritual of corpse transport to Karbalā', indicating that it was a newly innovated ritual with no basis of support among the practices of the Shī'ī *imāms*, that its proponents relied on weak traditions and ignored the many stipulations and restrictions specified in their own sources.[29]

Similar to previous examples of scholarly opposition by an isolated minority of intellectuals, massive popular support for the innovated ritual and manipulation of popular sentiments by politically savvy members of the *'ulamā'* class led to the perpetuation and continuation of the newly introduced rituals. As Catherine Bell has noted in her work on rituals,

> Ritualized activities can be taken as traditional within a very short time; they can also be very flexibly appropriated; they may be practiced more or less faithfully despite strong reservations about every aspect of them... Effective ritual need not be uncontested or invulnerable to political manipulation and trendy commercialization.[30]

Thus, in spite of the lack of historical evidence supporting such newly popularized rituals such as the dramatic recreation of the events of the battle of Karbalā', the violent bloodshedding rituals, and the corpse transport ritual, and despite the historical, intellectual, and legal arguments against them, proponents of these rituals apparently saw the potential of perpetuating the centrality of the symbolism of rituals commemmorating the battle of Karbalā', the shedding of Ḥusayn's blood, and the visitation of his corpse, in

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[29] Nakash, 194.

[30] Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 252.

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propagating and perpetuating a new Shī'ī identity. Furthermore, once these popular rituals achieved religious legitimacy by way of support from among the *'ulamā'* class, they entered annual Shī'ī practice and literally *became* tradition. Such examples make clear the illusiory nature of certain traditions because "rituals tend to present themselves as unchanging, time-honored customs of an enduring community. Even when no such claims are explicitly made within or outside the rite, a variety of cultural dynamics tend to make us take it for granted that rituals are old in some way."[31] This illusion only served these members of the Shī'ī *'ulamā'* class even further, for once they actively supported and legitimized the newly introduced rituals, they had become part and parcel of Shī'ī identity. To reject them was to reject the entire faith, and indeed, to this day, they, along with the other Karbalā' commemoration rituals are the essential medium by which Shī'ī self-definition (via the Karbalā' folk narrative) is transmitted intergenerationally.

[31] Bell, 210.

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APPENDIX A:

ISNĀD INDEX

All volume and page references are preceded by the following abbreviations indicating the sources of information:

TK= Yūsuf b. al-Zakī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā' al-rijāl*, ed. Bashshar ʿAwwād Maʿrūf (Beirut: Mu'assisat al-Risāla, 1980).

KT= Aḥmad b. ʿAbdullāh al-Khazrajī, *Khulāṣat tahdhīb tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā' al-rijāl*, ed. Maḥmūd ʿAbd al-Wahāb Fāyiḍ (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qāhira, 1971).

MR= Sayyid Abu al-Qāsim al-Khu'ī, *Mu'jam rijāl al-ḥadīth* (Najaf: Maṭbaʿat al-Ādāb, 1970).

MM= ʿUmar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam al-muʾallifīn* (Beirut: Dār Ihyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, n.d.).

KD= Muḥammad Manṣūr al-Murādī, *Kitāb al-dhikr*, ed. Muḥammad Yaḥyā Sālim Gharrān (Ṣanʿā Maktabat Badr, 1997).

BA= *Biḥār al-anwār*

QS= Najm al-Dīn ʿUmar b. Muḥammad al-Nasfī, ed. Naẓr Muḥammad al-Fāriyābī, *al-Qand fī dhikr 'ulamā' Samarqand* (Riyāḍ: Maktabat Kawthar, 1991).

TM= ʿAbdullāh al-Māmāghānī, *Tanṣīh al-maqāl* (Najaf: al-Jāmiʿa al-Murtaḍawīya, 1931).

QR= Muḥammad Taqī al-Tustarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl* (Tehran: Markaz-e Nashr-e Kitāb, 1966.

TB= al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*

WA= Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1968)

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DH= al-Tehrānī, *al-Dharī'a ilā taṣānīf al-Shī'a.*

AN= Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-A'lamī, *Tarājim a'lām al-nisā'* (Beirūt: al-Mu'assisa al-'Ilmī li al-maṭbū'āt, 1987).

KS= *Fihrist al-a'lām min kitāb al-khiṣāl li al-Ṣadūq* (Qum: Manshūrāt Jamā'at al-Mudarrisīn fi al-Ḥawza al-'Ilmīya bi Qum al-Muqaddasa, 1982.

Tradents' names (as they are mentioned in the *isnād*) are in boldface type. The remainder of the name and the death date (as researched through biographical dictionaries) is in normal type. The following abbreviations in boldface type indicate either the tradents' cities of origin or residence, as well as their genealogical or political affiliations:

K= Kūfī **B**= Baṣrī **W**= Wāṣitī **M**= Madanī **D**=Dimashqī
S= Shī'ī **H**= Hāshimī **A**='Alid **U**=Umayyad **Z**= Zubayrid
(Note: **A, U** and **Z** refer either to genealogical or political affiliation, or both)

'Abbād b. al-'Awām b. 'Umar al-Kilābī Abū Sahl al-Wāṣitī (d. ca. 185) **W** [TK 14:140]
'Abbād b. Ya'qūb al-Asdī Abū Sa'īd al-Kūfī (d. 250) **K, S** [TK 14:175]
'Abbās al-Jadalī
'Abbās b. Muḥammad b. Razīq
'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān b. al-Ḥakam al-Umawī (d. 86) **U** [TK 18:408]
'Abd al-Malik b. 'Umayr al-Kūfī (d. 136) **K** [KT 2:178]
'Abd al-Qādir b. Muḥammad
'Abdullāh b. 'Ammār b. 'Abd Yaghūth al-Bāriqī
'Abdullāh b. 'Āṣim (probably al-Baṣrī al-Ḥamdānī) **B** [TK 15:37]
'Abdullāh b. Faḍl b. 'Abbās **al-Hāshimī** (d. before 180) **M, H** [TK 15:432]
'Abdullāh b. al-Ḥakam b. Abī Ziyād (d. 255) **K,** dihqān [T: 14:427]
'Abdullāh b. al-Ḥasan b. Ḥasan b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 145) **A** [TK 14:414]
'Abdullāh b. al-Ḥasan b. Fāṭimah d. al-Ḥusayn (n.d.) **A**
'Abdullāh b. Ḥāzim al-Bakrī (see Abdullāh b. Khāzim al-Kuthayrī)
'Abdullāh b. al-Ḥusayn al-Azdī al-Baṣrī (d. after 100) **B** [TK 14:420]
'Abdullāh b. Ḥusayn b. Taym
'Abdullāh b. Khāzim al-Kuthayrī (d. 71 or 87) **B** [TK 14:441]
'Abdullāh b. Manṣūr *(raḍī' li awlād Zayd b. 'Alī)*
'Abdullāh b. Maymūn, a companion of al-Ṣādiq (d. 148) **A, S** [MR 10:371]
'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad
'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān b. 'Abdullāh b. al-Ḥasan
'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad b. 'Umar b. 'Alī (d. end of the caliphate of Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr (r. 136-8) **M, A** [TK 16:93]
'Abdullāh b. Rabī'a b. Yazīd al-Dimashqī **al-Ḥimyarī** (alive during the caliphate of Yazīd) **D** [14:489]

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'Abdullāh b. Sharīk al-'Āmirī (was one hundred years old during the time of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya) **K** [TK 15:82-7]; also a companion of al-Sajjād (d. 92) and al-Bāqir (d. 114) [MR 10:227]
'Abdullāh al-Thumālī al-Azdī (alive during the reign of Mu'āwiya, but died in 56, Shāmī, the governor of Ḥimṣ) **U** [TK 15:444]
'Abdullāh b. 'Ubaydullāh b. Yaḥyā
'Abdullāh b. 'Umayr *mawlā Umm Faḍl* (d. 117) **H** [TK 15:384]
'Abdullāh b. Yasār al-Juhanī
'Abdullāh b. Yazīd al-Ḥimyarī
'Abdullāh b. Yazīd b. Rawḥ b. Zinbā' al-Judhāmī al- Qurashī (d. 213) **B** [TK 16:301-20]
'Abdullāh b. al-Zubayr, possibly b. 'Awām (d. 72) **Z** [TK 14:508]
'Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Abī al-Ḥadīd *fī shark nahj al-balāghah*
'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī al-Zināḍ (d. 174) **M,** Qurashī [KT 12:132]
'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Anas
'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Aslamī [possibly T 17:34, 57, or 58]
'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Jundub
'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Marwān
'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Shurayḥ, possibly b. 'Abdullāh al-Iskandarī (d. 167) [TK 17:167]
'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Yazīd b. Jābir al-Azdī (d. ca. 155) [TK 18:5]
Abū 'Abdullāh [possibly T 34:24 or 29]
Abū 'Abdullāh al-Muḥāmilī
Abū Aḥmad al-Ḥasan b. 'Abdullāh b. Sa'īd **al-'Askarī** (d. 382) [MM 3:239]
Abū Aḥmad Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubayr **al-Zubayrī** al-Asadī al-Kūfī (d. 230) **K, Z** [TK 25:476. and 33:15]
Abū al-'Alā'
Abū al-'Alā' al-Ḥāfiẓ
Abū 'Alī al-Ansārī
Abū 'Awāna al-Wāḍiḥ b. 'Abdullāh al-Yashkarī (d. 175) **W** [TK 30:447 and 34:154]
Abū Bakr b. 'Abd al-Bāqī
Abū Bakr b. Aḥmad b. Ya'qūb
Abū Bakr b. 'Ayyāsh b. Sālim al-Asadī al-Kūfī (d. ca. 195) **K** [TK 33:129]
Abū Bakr b. Mālik
Abū al-Barqī
Abū Burza Nadla b. 'Ubayd **al-Aslamī** (d. ca. 64), a companion of the Prophet [TK 29:407 and 33:83]
Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī (d. 32) [TK 33:398]
Abū al-Fatḥ b. 'Abdullāh
Abū al-Ghanā'im b. Abī 'Uthmān
Abū Ḥamza Thābit b. Abī Ṣafīya **al-Thumālī**, a companion of al-Bāqir (d. 114) and al-Ṣādiq (d. 148), **K, S, A** [TK 4:357 and RK # 1953]
Abū Ḥamza b. Yazīd al-Ḥaḍramī
Abū al-Ḥasan

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Abū Idrīs possibly Abū Idrīs *ghayr mansūb*, **B** [TK 33:21]
Abū Isḥāq, ʿAmr b. ʿAbdullāh [TK 33:30 and KT 3:198]
Abū Jaʿfar al-ʿAbsī
Abū Jaʿfar al-Tūsī
Abū Janāb Yaḥyā b. Abī Ḥayya **al-Kalbī** (d. 150) **K** [TK 31:284 and 33: 207]
Abū al-Jārūd Ziyād b. al-Mundhir **al-Aʿmā al-Kūfī, K, S** [TK 9:817 and 33:180]
Abū Jawāb al-Ahwas b. Jawāb **al-Dabbī** [TK 33:210]
Abū Khālid
Abū Khaythama Zuhayr b. Muʿāwiya al-Juʿfī (d. 173) [TK 33:290]
Abū Mansūr b. ʿAbd al-Munʿim b. Nuʿmān al-Baghdādī (alive in 252) [BA 44:64]
Abū Maʿshar Najīḥ b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Madanī *al-maʿrūf bi al-Sindī, mawlā banī Hāshim* (d. 170) **M, H** [TK 29:322]
Abū Muʿāwiya
Abū Muḥammad al-Jawharī
Abū Muslim Kashshī
Abū Mutawakkil
Abū Nuʿaym al-Ḥāfiẓ
Abū Qudāma b. Saʿd
Abū Rabīʿa ʿUmar b. Rabīʿa **al-Ayyādī** [TK 33:305]
Abū Saʿīd ʿUqayṣā (sic., in Tabarī: ʿUqays)
Abū Sālih al-Ḥanafī, possibly Sumayʿ al-Zayyāt al-Kūfī, **K** [33:417]
Abū ʿUmāra al-ʿAbsī, possibly al-Ansārī [34:107]
Abū al-Waddāk Jabr b. Nawf al-Hamdānī al-Kūfī, **K** [TK 4:495]
Abū Wajra Yazīd b. ʿUbayd **al-Saʿdī** (d. 130) [TK 32:301]
Abū Wajza al-Saʿdī see Abū Wajra al-Saʿdī
Abū Zayd *ʿalayhi al-salām*, seeʿAlī b. Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, **M, A**
ʿAfīf b. Zuhayr b. Abī al-Akhnas
ʿAffān b. Muslim b. ʿAbdullāh b. Ṣaffār, *mawlā* (d. 219) **B** [TK 20:160]
Aḥmad b. ʿAbbās
Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān
Aḥmad b. ʿAbdullāh Abū Muḥammad
Aḥmad b. ʿAbdullāh b. Yūnus
Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-ʿĀṣimī
Aḥmad al-Bayḥaqī
Aḥmad b. al-Ḥārith al-Khazzāz
Aḥmad b. Aʿtham al-Kūfī al-Kindī (d. 314) [EI2]
Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā
Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā b. Abī Mūsā al-ʿIjlī
Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā b. Zayd b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn, Z [KD]
Aḥmad b. Janāb al-Maṣṣīsī *Baghdādī al-asl* (d. 236) [TK 1:285]
Aḥmad b. Maʿrūf Abū al-Ḥasan
Aḥmad b. Muḥammad
Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Shabīb Abū Bakr b. Shayba

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Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Ḥamza
Aḥmad b. Sa'īd
Aḥmad b. Shabīb
'Alī b. 'Abd al-'Azīz [TK 21:55]
'Alī b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Īsā Abū al-Ḥasan, seems to be a Zaydī, as he is in the *isnād* of *Kitāb al-dhikr*.
'Alī b. Aḥmad al-Kirbās (sic., al-Kirbāsī) **Abū al-Ḥasan** [QS, 369, #670]
'Alī b. 'Atā' al-Muḥāribī
'Alī b. Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālīb (d. 92) **M, H, A** [KT 2: 246]
'Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd al-Majīd al-Wāṣiṭī (d. 262) **W** [TK 20:315]
'Alī b. Ismā'īl
'Alī b. Muḥammad Abū al-Faraj
'Alī b. Sālih, possibly b. Ḥayy al-Kūfī al-Hamdānī (d. ca. 153) **K** [TK 20: 464]
'Alī b. Sālim b. Shawwāl, **B** [TK 20: 446]
'Alī b. Ta'"ān al-Muḥāribī
'Alī b. Ṭalḥa
'Alī b. Zayd b. 'Abdullāh b. Jud'ān (d. ca. 130) **B** [TK 20: 434]
al-A'mash
'Āmir b. Abī Muḥammad
'Āmir b. 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Baṣrī (d. after 110) **B** [TK 14:65]
'Amr, possibly the same as 'Amr b. Murra al-Jamalī
'Amr b. Ba'ja
'Amr b. al-Ḥasan
'Amr b. Murra al-Jamalī al-Murādī Abū Mikhnaf (d. ca. 117) **K** [TK 22:232]
'Amr b. Shubba, see 'Umar b. Shubba
al-'Amrī
'Ammār b. 'Abdullāh b. Yasār al-Juhanī
'Ammār b. Mu'āwiya al-Dihuhnī (d. 133) **K, S** [TK 21:208]. See also 'Ammār b. Khubāt [MR 12:274 #8634], who is apparently the same individual.
Anas b. Mālik (d. ca. 90), **M** [TK 3:353]
'Āṣim b. Ḥamīd *shaykh Kūfī*, **K** [TK 13:482]
'Aṭā' b. Sā'ib b. Mālik (d. 136) **K** [TK 20:86]. Also, according to [MR #1781] he was Sunnī but then converted and became Shī'ī.
Awāna b. al-Ḥakam
'Awn b. Abī Juḥayfa Wahb al-Sawā'ī, **K** [TK 22:447]
al-Awzā'ī 'Abd al-Raḥmān (d. 157) [MM 5:163]
Ayyūb b. Mushrih al-Khaywānī
Ayyūb b. Nūḥ
Bahja d. al-Ḥārith b. 'Abdullāh al-Ta'labī
Bakr b. 'Abd al-Wahāb (alive in 255) [TK 4:220]
Bakr b. 'Abdullāh b. Ḥabīb
Bakr b. Mus'ab al-Muzanī
Bakrād b. al-Ṭayyib b. Sham'ūn, Abū al-Qāsim

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al-Barqī
Bishr b. ʿĀsim
Bishr b. Ghālib
Bashīr b. Khuzaym al-Asdī
al-Dahhāk b. ʿAbdullāh al-Mishraqī
al-Faḍl
Faḍīl al-Rassān
al-Faḍīl b. al-Zubayr, *ʿamm Abī Aḥmad al-Zubayrī*, a companion of al-Bāqir (d. 114) and al-Ṣādiq (d. 148), **Z** [See: Ibn al-Zubayr, introduction]
Faḍāla b. Ayyūb
Fāṭima d. ʿAlī, A [TK 35:261]
Fāṭima d. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (present at the battle of Karbalā') **M, A** [TK 35:254]
al-Ghāz b. Rabīʿa al-Jurashī
Ḥafṣa d. Sīrīn [TK 35:151]
al-Hamdānī
Ḥamīd b. Muslim, a companion of al-Sajjād (d. 92), **K, S** [TM 1:380]
Ḥamīd
Ḥammād b. ʿĪsā al-Juhanī (d. 208) **W** or **B** [TK 7:281]
Ḥammād b. Salama b. Dīnār al-Basrī Abū Salama (d. 169) [TK 7:253]
Hamza b. Yazīd al-Ḥaḍramī
Ḥamza b. al-Qāsim al-ʿAlawī
Ḥamza b. Bayḍ
Ḥamza b. Ḥamrān
Hāni' b. Thubayt al-Qāyidī
Hārūn b. ʿĪsā, possibly Hārūn b. Abī ʿĪsā, *kātib Ibn Isḥāq ṣāḥib al-sīra* [TK 30:102 and KT 3:108]
Hārūn b. al-Jahm
Hārūn b. Muslim al-Basrī, **B** [30:104]
Hāshim b. ʿAmmār
al-Haytham b. ʿAdīy
al-Haytham b. Mūsā
Hilāl b. Yasāf al-Ashmaʿī Abū al-Ḥasan al-Kūfī (alive during the lifetime of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib) **K** [TK 30:353]
Ḥimyar, possibly Ḥimyar b. Bashīr b. al-Ḥimyarī, **B** [TK 7:419]
Hishām b. ʿAmmār al-Sullamī Abū al-Walīd al-Dimashqī al-Muqri' al-Ḥāfiẓ (d. 245) **D** [TK 30:242]
Hishām b. Ḥassān al-Azdī al-Qardūsī (d. 146) **B** [TK 30:181]
Hishām b. Muḥammad
Habbāb b. Mūsā, possibly Ḥabbān b. Mūsā [TK 5:344-6]?
al-Ḥajjāj
al-Ḥajjāj b. Muḥammad al-Maṣṣīsī Abū Aḥmad al-Aʿwar (d. 206), moved to Baghdad [TK 5:451]

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al-Ḥārith b. Ḥaṣīra al-Azdī Abū Nu'mān al-Kūfī, companion of al-Ṣādiq (d. 148) **K, S** [TK 5:224 and RK 4:196]
al-Ḥārith b. Ka'b al-Wālibī
al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad al-Fārisī
al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad *bi Ṭarsūs* Abū 'Alī (d. 291) [TK 6:47]
al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib al-Farzālī *bi al-Rayy* al-Faqīh Abū 'Alī
al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī Abū Muḥammad al-Shāhid, possibly al-Kūfī (d. 270) **K** [TK 6:257]
al-Ḥasan b. Ja'far b. Midrār
al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Jawharī
al-Ḥusayn b. Sa'īd
al-Ḥasan b. 'Umar
al-Ḥasan b. 'Uthmān b. Ziyād al-Tustarī
Ḥusayn b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulāmī (d. 136) **K** [TK 6:519]
al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Rahmān **b. Fahm** al-Baghdādī [TK 25:256] Note that comparison of trachers and students reveals that this is clearly the same individual, but he is not mentioned in an individual entry. He is found listed in the entry for Muhammad Ibn Sa'd, author of the *Ṭabaqāt* as one of his students. See also Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā,* ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir Ra'tā (Beitrut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyah, 1997), 1:7.
Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad see above.
al-Ḥusayn b. Naṣr b. al-Muzāhim (d. after 212) **K**, moved to Baghdad [QR 3:341 and TB 13:282]
al-Ḥusayn b. 'Ubaydullāh al-Kūfī
al-Ḥusayn b. 'Uqba al-Murādī
Ḥizamī
'Abdullāh **Ibn 'Abbās** (d. ca. 70) **M, H** [TK 15:154 and 34:456]
Ibn 'Abdūs
Muḥammad b. Mughīra b. al-Ḥārith **Ibn Abī Dhi'b** (d. 159) **K** [KT 2:431 and WA 4:183]
Ibn Abī Najrān
'Abd al-Raḥmān **Ibn Abī Zinād** (d. 174) Qurashī, Mawlā, **M** lived in Baghdād [TK 17:95]
Ibn Asbāṭ
Ibn 'Awn, possibly 'Abdullāh b. 'Awn b. Arbāt al-Muzanī (d. ca. 150) **B** [TK 34:465]
Ibn Ja'dīyah
Ibn Khālid, possibly 'Amr b. Khālid al-Wāsiṭī, *mawlā* Banī Hāshim (d. 3rd cent.) **H, K** [TK 21:603]
'Abdullāh **Ibn Mubārak** al-Marwazī (d. 181) [TK 16:5]
Ibn Numā
Ibn Qutayba
Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. Ja'far **Ibn Qawlawayh**, *sāhib Kāmil al-ziyārāt* **S** [DH 17:255]
Ibn Shahrāshūb
Ibn al-Walīd
Ibn Yaḥyā b. Abī Samīna

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Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbdullāh
Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbdullāh b. Mūsā b. Yūnus b. Abī Isḥāq al-Subayʿī
Ibrāhīm b. Maysara
Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā b. Yūnus b. Abī Isḥāq
al-ʿUrbān b. Haytham
ʿĪsā b. Yazīd al-Kinānī
Ismāʿīl b. Abī Idrīs [TK 3:41]
Ismāʿīl b. Abī Muhājir, quite likely (d. 132), **D**, **U**, was with ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān and ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz [KT 3:238 and T 3:143]
Ismāʿīl b. Aḥmad al-Bayḥaqī
Ismāʿīl b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sammān al-Rāzī
Isma'īl b. Aws
Ismāʿīl b. Ibrāhīm al-Asadī (d. 193) **B** [TK 3:23]
Ismāʿīl b. Mūsā
Ismāʿīl b. Muḥammad, possibly b. Ismāʿīl (d. 232) **K** [TK 3:187], because [TK 27:69] lists Ismāʿīl b. Muḥammad al-Ṣaffār as a teacher of Muḥammad b. Yūnus.
Jābir b. ʿAbdullāh b. ʿAmr b. Ḥarām (d. ca. 79) **M** [TK 4:443]
Jaʿfar b. Barqān (d. ca. 154) Raqqī, moved to Kūfa, **K** [TK 5:18]
Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad b. Shākir **al-Sāʾigh** (d. 279) Baghdādī, buried in Kūfa [TK 5:103]
Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn **al-Ṣādiq** (d. 148) Sixth Shīʿī *imām* **H, A, S** [TK 5:74]
Janāb
Jarīr
Jarīr b. Ḥāzim (d. 170) **B** [TK 4:524]
Jarīz see above.
al-Jarīrī
Juwayra b. Asmāʾ see Juwayrīya [TK 5:172]
Juwayrīya b. Asmāʾ, **B** [TK 5:172]
al-Kalbī
Kathīr b. Hishām al-Kilābī Abū Sahl al-Raqqī (d. 207-8) Baghdādī, and **D** [TK 24:163]
Khālid b. ʿAbdullāh b. Yazīd al-Ṭahhān (d. 179) **W** [TK 8:100]
Khālid al-Hadhdhāʾ
Khālid b. Yazīd b. Asad b. ʿAbdullāh al-Qushayrī see next entry
Khālid b. Yazīd b. ʿAbdullāh al-Qaṣrī, possibly Khālid b. Yazīd b. Jarīr al-Bajalī, a companion of al-Ṣādiq (d. 148) **K** [MR 7:44]
Laqīṭ
al-Layth, possibly Ibn Saʿd (d. 174) [TK 24:255]
Lūṭ b. Yaḥyā al-Ghāmidī Abū Mikhnaf (d. 180 or 157) **K** [EI2]
al-Maʿallī b. Kulayb
al-Madāʾinī ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbdullāh al-Baṣrī (d. 225) **B** [MM 7:211] indicates that he had a book entitled *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn*, which must have been the source that Iṣfahānī, and perhaps others, used.
Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar al-Zamakhshārī (d. 538-9) Khwārazmī

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Ma'mar b. Ja 'far
Marīsa d. Mūsā b. Yūnus b. Abī Isḥāq, A, S [AN 2:400]
Marjāna
Marwān b. Ismā'īl
Marwān b. Sa'd
Mawri' b. Suwayd b. Qays
Maymūn b. Mahrān (d. ca. 116) *mawlā* **K** [TK 29:210]
Maymūn b, Shaybān
Mu'āwiya b. 'Ammār b. Abī Mu'āwiya al-Duhnī al-Kūfī, **K** [TK 26:202]
Mudrik b. 'Umāra
al-Mufīd, Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. al-Nu'mān, (d. 413) Baghdādī, **S** [DH 23:277]
Mughīra b. Miqsam al-Dabbī (d. 136) **K** [TK 28:397]
Muḥammad b. al-'Abbās Abū 'Umar al-Khazzāz
Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Bāqī al-Bazzāz Abū Bakr
Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Qāsim al-Taymī
Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh b. 'Alī al-Nāqid
Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh al-Ansārī (d. before 230) **B** [TK 25:481]
Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh al-Ḥaḍramī
Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh al-Ju'fī *bi al-Kūfa*
Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar al-Khānī
Muḥammad b. Abī al-Sahbān
Muḥammad b. Abī Ṭālib b. Aḥmad al-Ḥusaynī al-Ḥā'irī *ṣāḥib maqtal al-Ḥusayn*
Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-'Ayyāsh (alive in 252) [from Majlisī's own *isnād*]
Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Ḥamza
Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan al-Bathānī al-Kūfī (d. 445) [Siyar a'lām 17:636]
Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib Abū Ja'far al-Bāqir (d. 114) **H, A** [TK 26:136]
Muḥammad b. 'Ammār al-Rāzī, possibly [TK 26:103]
Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Abī Madh'ūr
Muḥammad b. 'Amr al-Zayyāt
Muḥammad b. Bashīr al-Hamdānī (d. before 180) one of the *shaykhs* of Abū Mikhnaf.
Muḥammad b. al-Dahhāk al-Mishraqī
Muḥammas b. Ghālib al-Iṣfahānī (alive in 252) according to Majlisi's own *isnād.*
Muḥammad b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Lakhmī al-Wasitī
Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Makhzūmī
Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn
Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ashnāthī
Muḥammad b. 'Īsā
Muḥammad b. Isḥāq al-Sirāj Abū al-'Abbās
Muḥammad b. Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. Ḥafṣ b. al-Imām (d. 300), *mawlā* in Baghdād [TK 24:585]
Muḥammad b. Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. Hārūn al-Tamīmī al-Kūfī (d. 402)
Muḥammad b. Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. al-Haytham, Abū Bakr

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Muḥammad b. Mansūr al-Murādī al Muqri' Abū Ja'far (d. 290) **K, Z** The author of *Kitāb al-dhikr.*
Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Zayd al-Ḥasanī al-Ḥusaynī, Abū al-Ḥasan
Muḥammad b. Muslim
Muḥammad b. Qays
Muḥammad b. Sa'd (d. 230), *mawlā banī Hāshim, kātib al-Wāqidī* **W, H** [TK 25:256]
Muḥammad b. al-Sā'ib al-Kalbī (d. 146) **K** [TK 25: 246]
Muḥammad b. Sinān, two possibilities, al-Bāhili (d. 223), al-Qazzāz (d. 271) both **B** [TK 25:320, 323]
Muḥammad b. Sīrīn al-Ansārī (d. 110) **B** [TK 25:344]
Muḥammad b. Sulaymān see next entry
Muḥammad b. Sulaymān b. 'Abdullāh b. al-Ḥasan (d. 181) **K** [TK 25:308]
Muḥammad b. 'Umar b. 'Alī, died in the beginning of the caliphate of Abū 'Abbās (r. 132-6) **B** [TK 26:174]
Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Baghdādī al-Ju'ābī (d. 355) [MM 11:92 and KS]
Muḥammad b. 'Umar b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī (in Balādhurī, b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī) **H, A** [TK 26:203]
Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Waqidī (d. 207) Baghdād [TK 26:193]
Muḥammad (sic. Maḥmūd) **b. 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī**
Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā
Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Ḥamza
Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī (d. 328-9) **S**
Muḥammad b. Yūnus b. Mūsā b. Sulaymān al-Kar b. Mūsā b. Sulaymān al-Kudaymī al-Basrī (d. 286) **B** [TK 27:66]
Muḥammad b. Zakarīyā
Muḥammad b. al-Zubayr al-Ḥandalī al-Baṣrī, **B** [TK 25:211]
Mujālid b. Sa'īd b. 'Umayr b. Baṣṭām al-Hamdānī (d. 144) **K** [TK 27:219]
Mukhlid b. Hamza b. Bayd
Mūsā b. Ismā'īl al-Munqarī (d. 223) **B** [TK 29:21]
Muslim
al-Naḍr b. Shumayl
Naṣr al-Muzāhim
al-Naṣr b. Suwayd
al-Nawfalī
Nu'aym b. al-Walīd
Numayr b. Wa'la
Qāsim b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān *mawlā* Yazīd b. Mu'āwiyah (d. ca. 115) **D, U** [TK 23:283]
al-Qāsim b. Bukhayt
al-Qāsim b. Salām
Qurra b. Khālid al-Sadūsī (d. 154 or 170) **B** [TK 23:577]
Qutayba b. Sa'īd
Rabī' b. Tamīm
Rabī'a al-Jurashī (d. 64) **D** [TK 9:137]

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Rawḥ b. al-Faraḥ al-Miṣrī Abū Zinbā' al-Qaṭṭān (d. 282) [TK 9:250]
al-Riḍā
Ruzayq *mawlā* Mu'āwiya
Sa'd
Sa'd b. 'Ubayda al-Sullamī (d. during the governorship of 'Umar b. Ḥubayra over Kūfa) **K** [10:290]
al-Sa'dābādī
Sa'dawīyah see: Sa'īd b. Sulaymān al-Ḍabbī
Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan b. Abī Bābawayh **al-Ṣadūq** (d. 381) **S** [EI2]
Ṣafīya d. Yūnus b. Abī Isḥāq [AN 2:238]
Ṣafwān
Ṣahl
Sahl b. Sa'd b. Mālik al-Ansārī (d. ca. 88) **M** [TK 12:190]
Sa'īd b. Abī al-Rajjā', Abū al-Faraj
Sa'īd b. Dīnār al-Sa'dī
Sa'īd b. Mudrik b. 'Umāra
Sa 'īd b. Sulaymān al-Ḍabbī (d. 225) **W** moved to Baghdād [TK 10:483, K^{T}]
Sālim
al-Sarkhaskī
al-Saq'ab b. al-Zuhayr, *khāl Abī Mikhnaf* [TK 13:219]
al-Sayyid Abū Ṭālib
Shahr b. Hawshab al-Ash'arī (d. ca. 100-110) Ḥimṣ, **D** [TK 12:578]
Shahrdār b. Shīrūyeh al-Daylāmī
Sharīk, possibly b. 'Abdullāh b. Abī Sharīk (d. 177) **K** [TK 12:462]
Shaybān b. Mukharram, alive during the lifetime of 'Ali b. Abī Tālib [TK 12:601]
Shurayh al-Qādī [TK 12:434]
Ismā'īl b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān **al-Suddī** (d. 172) **K, S** [TK 3:132]
Sufyān b. 'Uyayna Abū Muḥammad al-Kūfī, *mawlā* Muḥāzim (d. 198) **K** [TK 11:177]
Sulaymān b. 'Abdullāh b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan see Sulaymān b. 'Abdullāh b. al-Iṣfahānī. Possibly the same individual
Sulaymān b. Abī (?) **Rāshid,** possibly Sulaymān b. Rāshid, companion of al-Ṣādiq, **K** [TK 11:428 and RK 8:262]
Sulaymān b. Aḥmad al-A'mash
Sulaymān b. Ḥarb (d. 224) **B** [TK 11:384]
Sulaymān b. Mahrān al-A'mash (d. 147) **K** [TK 12:76]
Sulaymān b. Muslim, possibly Sulaymān b. Abī Muslim al-Makkī [TK 12:62]
'Āmir b. Sharāhīl **al-Sha'bī** (d. 103-110) **K** [TK 14:28]
Ṭāhir b. al-Ḥusayn al-Rāzī Abū Bakr
Ṭāhir b. Midrār
Ṭaym b. Bahlūl al-Dabbī Abū Muḥammad
Ṭāwūs possibly Ibn kaysān al-Yamānī, *mawlā Hamdān* (d. ca. 105) [TK 13:357]
al-Tirmidhī
Thābit b. Abī Safīya al-Thumālī see Abū Ḥamza al-Kūfī (d. ca. 148) **K**

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Thābit b. Hubayra
Thā'ir b. al-Ḥasan al-Rāzī Abū Bakr
'Umar al-Bazzāz
'Umar b. Sa'd al-Ḥafrī al-Kūfī (d. ca. 205) **K** [TK 21:360]
'Umar b. Shabba b. 'Ubayda al-Numayrī (d. 262) **K** [TK 21:386]
'Umāra b. 'Umayr al-Kūfī, died during the caliphate of Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 96-99) **K** [TK 21:256]
'Umayr b. Isḥāq, alive during the battle of Karbalā', and narrates from both 'Alids and Umayyads, although mostly Umayyads. Qurayshī, *mawlā banī Hāshim,* **H** [TK 22:369]
'Uqba b. Bishr al-Asdī, most likely 'Uqba b. Bashīr, a companion of both al-Sajjād (d. 92) and al-Bāqir (d. 114), **K, S** [MR 11:161, #7716]
'Uqba b. Sum'ān (al-Kalbī)
'Urwa b. al-Zubayr b. al-'Awām b. Khuwaylid (d. ca. 100) **M, Z** [TK 20:11]
'Utba b. Sum'ān al-Kalbī
'Uthmān b. Ḥizāmī, possibly 'Uthmān b. Ḥizām al-Bajalī [TK 19:349]
Wahb b. Jarīr b. Ḥāzim al-Azdī (d. 206) **B** [TK 31:121]
Wahb b. Jurayz, see above
al-Walīd b. Muslim Abū al-'Abbās al-Dimashqī, *mawlā banī Umayya* (d. 195) Dimashq, **U** [TK 31:86]
Wāsil b. 'Abd al-A'lā al-Asadī al-Kūfī (d. 244) **K** [TK 30:404]
Yaḥyā b. 'Abdullāh **b. Bukayr** al-Misrī, *mawlā banī Makhzūm* (d. 231) [TK 31:401]
Yaḥyā b. Ḥammād b. Abī Ziyād al-Shaybānī (d. 215) **B** [TK 31:276] Also, [KT, 363] mentions that he is the son-in-law of Abū 'Awāna.
Yaḥyā b. Ḥamza b. Wāqid al-Ḥaḍramī (d. ca. 182) Qādī Dimashqī [TK 31:278]
Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥasan al-'Alawī, A
Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn b. Ismā'īl b. Zayd
Yaḥyā b. Ismā'īl b. Abī al-Muhājir, according to Ibn Sa'd's *al-Tabaqāt* 1:437, he is Yahyā b. Ismā'īl b. 'Abdullāh, of which there are three in [TK 31:203-6]
Yaḥyā b. Maḥmūd b. Sa'd al-Thaqafī
Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd b. Dīnār b. Furūj al-Qattān **al-Sa'dī** (d. 198) **B** [TK 31:329] Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt* 1:7. Also, 1:436 in footnote 427 explains that he is *shaykh al-Wāqidī.*
Yaḥyā b. Umm Ṭawīl
Yaḥyā b. Zakarīyā b. Abī Zā'ida Maymūn b. Fayrūz al-Hamdānī (d. 184) **K** [TK 31:305]
al-Yaqtīnī
Yazīd b. Abī Ziyād al-Qurashī al-Hāshimī (d. 137) *mawlā,* **K** [TK 32:135]
Yazīd b. Rawḥ b. Zinbā' al-Judhāmī
Yūnus b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān
Yūnus b. Abī Isḥāq 'Amr b. 'Abdullāh al-Hamdānī Abū Isrā'īl al-Kūfī (d. ca. 159) **K** [TK 32:488]
Yūnus al-Kannāsī
Yūsuf b. Muḥammad al-Bilālī Abū Ya'qūb

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Yūsuf b. Yazīd, possibly [TK 32:477]?
Zayd *'alayhi al-salām* Zayd b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 122) **A, Z**
Zakarīyā b. Yaḥyā b. 'Umar **al-Darīr** al-Kūfī *nazīl* Baghdād (d. 251) **K** [TK 9:383]
Ziyād b. Mundhir, see Abū al-Jārūd
al-Zubaydī, possibly Muḥammad b. al-Walīd b. 'Āmir al-Ḥaḍramī al-Ḥimṣī (d. ca. 147)
al-Zubayr, possibly b. Bakkār, qāḍī of Mecca (d. 256) **M** [TK 9:293]
Zuhayr b. 'Abdullāh al-Khath'amī, possibly [TK 9:407-8]
al-Zuhrī, Muḥammad b. Muslim b. 'Ubaydullāh b. 'Abdullāh b. Shihāb Abū Mus'ab (d. 124) [EI2]

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APPENDIX B:

FOLK KARBALĀ' AND SHĪ'Ī IDENTITY

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the Karbalā' narrative is its relation to folk culture among the Shī'īs of the world. Whereas many of the early historical sources that this study has examined represent more or less the voices of the educated elite (both Sunnī and Shī'ī) throughout the many centuries of the narrative's development, the common peoples' conceptions of Karbalā' have also had a significant role to play in the development of depictions of the battle of Karbalā'. In fact, it seems that the development of the literary depictions of the battle, particularly in the middle periods of Islamic history, was directly related not only to the development of common peoples' conceptions of the battle and of their prophet's grandson, but also to the development of annual Karbalā' commemoration ceremonies. It appears that, by annual commemoration of the historical events of the battle popularized among the masses, these common perceptions of the battle of Karbalā' in general, and the figure of Ḥusayn in particular, simultaneously influenced and were influenced by the rituals of the commemoration ceremonies. Largely through oral transmission of the narrative of Karbalā', and by way of a number of highly symbolic rituals, the historical events of the first Islamic century no longer remained textual accounts in the historical works of the scholarly elite, much

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removed from the masses by class, time, and intellectual ideals. The annual ritual commemoration of the battle of Karbalā' made the battle real and identifiable to the masses, and not so far removed.

In this regard, a most interesting parallelism can be seen between the development of common perceptions of Ḥusayn at the battle of Karbalā' and the current science of folktale theory. In fact, a closer examination of the definitions of folklore as presented in the seminal works of Vladimir Propp reveal that the battle of Karbalā' has become part and parcel of the *folklore* of the Shī'ī community, which represents the culture of the Shī'ī masses, whereas the historical literature on Karbalā' may be seen as representing the point of view of Shī'ī scholars. Propp notes the differences between the two, saying, "folklore should be likened not to literature, but to language, which is invented by no one, and which has neither an author nor authors. It arises everywhere, and changes in a regular way, independently of peoples will, once there are appropriate conditions for it in the historical development of peoples."[1] Thus, the folklore of Karbalā' has its roots in oral literature that has no single author. Rather, it represents the collective consciousness of a community. In the case of the folklore of Karbalā', it also involves both material and spiritual culture, and it is restricted only to the Shī'ī community (while Sunnīs may not argue with the historical literature on Karbalā', they do not adopt the Shī'ī *folklore* of Karbalā'). All three factors (representation of the culture of the common classes,

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[1] Vladimir Propp, *Theory and History of Folklore* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 21.

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involvement of both material and spiritual culture, and restriction to one nation/community) are factors deemed by Propp as necessary for the study of folklore, and the common conceptions of Karbalā', as we shall see, satisfy all three criteria.

However, claiming that the battle of Karbalā' satisfies the criteria for being considered folklore is not to say that a historical battle of Karbalā' did not occur, or that it is a myth. Indeed, the abundance of evidence in the early sources attests to the fact that the battle of Karbalā' was an actual historical event. Ironically, because all of Ḥusayn's fighters were killed along with him, this fact is established for the most part not by the Shī'ī community that was later to reap the benefits of historicizing the battle, but by the very opponents of Ḥusayn who gathered at Karbalā' to eliminate him, and survived to narrate accounts of the battle. Nevertheless, the historicity of an event does not automatically eliminate the possibility of that historical event being adopted into the folk culture of a given community. Propp notes that Russian folklore, in particular, is unusually rich in this regard. He states that, "The study of Russian folklore shows that indeed it is saturated with historical self-awareness. This is evident in heroic poetry and historical songs... a people with such an intensity of historical consciousness and with such an understanding of its historical tasks can never be defeated."[2] It is quite possible that Shī'ī *'ulamā'* scholars realized precisely this principle when they began to adopt and encourage these folk aspects of Karbalā' in their religious *fatwā* decrees regarding certain

[2] Propp, *Theory and History,* 15.

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innovated commemoration rituals that helped to foster and perpetuate the folklore of Karbalā'. In fact, it appears that a definite connection can be made between the development of this folkloric aspect of commoners' understanding of the battle of Karbalā' and the distinct radicalization in the later historical texts. Propp himself even admits that, "the closest connection exists between folklore and literature."[3] What is most ironic, is that it seems that, because of a number of historical, socio-political, and literary reasons, the development of the folklore of Karbalā' eventually infiltrated back into the literature of Karbalā' from which it once originated, apparently resulting in the extremely radically Shī'ī depictions of the characters and the events of the battle of Karbalā' that were presented in the previous chapter. Having examined developmentally numerous depictions of the events of the battle of Karbalā', and having noticed distinct gaps in continuity and dramatic changes in the depictions that suddenly shift to extremely radical depictions of Ḥusayn and of the events of the battle, an examination of the folkloric aspects of Karbalā' and the development of commemoration rituals revolving around and perpetuating the folklore of Karbalā' will help to explain these sudden and radical shifts in the historical understanding of the events of Karbalā'.

One of the reasons for the successful development of the folklore of the battle of Karbalā' rests not at all in its historicity, but in the mass-appeal of the battle narrative itself. Even the basic historical narrative, stripped of its political aspects, is nothing less

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[3] Propp, *Theory and History*, 5-6

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than a drama rich with potentially archetypal symbolism, including a clearly defined protagonist (Ḥusayn, the underdog) and militarily superior antagonists (Umayyads), dramatic military encounters (a band of less than one hundred vs. an army of at least 10,000), bravery against all odds, ruthless bloodshed, and the like. Sir Thomas Lyell, in his accounts of his travels through the fertile crescent, describes the reasons for the appeal of Karbalā' to the masses thus:

> The official teaching no longer makes any appeal to the masses. They live and thrive on the memory of their saints, whose moral qualities are rarely, if ever remembered, but whose feats in the battlefield form an unfailing source of conversation. What use has the cultivator for Allāh? None. That Allāh may be the Merciful, the Wise, the Judge, to the ninety-ninth power, is of absolutely no interest to him, and has no effect on his daily life. But the stature of ʿAlī or Ḥusayn, the way they fought, the blows they gave, the slaughter which they themselves carried out single-handed, the streams of blood which marked their passage through the hordes of the enemy, these are things that the people understand. Here are natural human personalities, exhibiting the perfection of the very qualities that they themselves possess: physical endurance, and bravery in warfare... a steadfastness and patience in suffering, which is characteristic in all the tribesmen.[4]

The ʿIrāqi sociologist ʿAlī al-Wardī, himself a Shīʿī, also indicates in his own sociological works that the appeal of Karbalā' and Ḥusayn to the common Shīʿīs is based not on the emotional mourning of his loss, but on the celebration of his characteristics of ideal manhood and heroism in the face of insurmountable odds.[5] No matter what the

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[4] Thomas Lyell, *The Ins and Outs of Mesopotamia* (London: A. M. Philpot, 1923), 183.

[5] ʿAlī al-Wardī, *Soziologie des Nomadentums: Studie über die iraqische Gesellschaft* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1972), 256-91.

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historical circumstances, and irrespective of political legitimacy, the potential of the basic structure of the Karbalā' narrative to serve as the basis for later embellishment, exaggeration, and dramatization is remarkable in itself. A dramatist or storyteller could hardly find a better narrative full of such rich symbolism and archetypal potential from which to work with. The Karbalā' narrative almost begs for dramatic embellishments when being recounted. Dramatization and exaggeration are inevitable.

Even more startling, a close examination of even the most basic accounts of the Karbalā' narrative as a whole, when considered in light of modern folk-tale theory, reveals startling structural correlations between the two. Bearing in mind that in the folk perception of Karbalā' Husayn is the protagonist and all Umayyads are representative antagonists, a step-by-step analysis of the events of the battle of Karbalā' shows that they match nearly exactly almost all of the stages in the development of a folktale, as identified in Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*.[6] In every step of the sequence of stages identified by Propp as consistently evident in a wide array of folktales examined, the Karbalā' narrative not only matches the stages thematically, but, surprisingly, also in sequence. The following comparison of the sequence identified by Propp (in italics) and the corresponding portions of the Karbalā' narrative will clarify this point.

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[6] Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktakle* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968). See: chapter 3, "Functions of Dramatis Personae."

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The basic Karbalā' narrative begins with the death of Mu'āwiya and the ascension of his son Yazīd to the caliphate. Mu'āwiya's death in the Karbalā' narrative corresponds to what Propp has identified as being nearly always the beginning of every folktale (*I. an important character absenting himself or dying*). Then, after the Umayyad governor at Madīna called on Ḥusayn, his companions warned him against going to see the governor (*II. an interdiction is addressed to the hero*). Ḥusayn then ignored the warnings of his companions and went to see the governor anyway (*III. the interdiction is violated*). Arriving at the governor's home, Ḥusayn was immediately questioned to see whether or not he would give the oath of allegiance to Yazīd (*IV. villain makes attempt at reconnaissance*). Ḥusayn initially refused and the governor realized that Ḥusayn would not accept (*V. villain receives information about victim*). Marwān b. Ḥakam, the former governor was present and ordered Ḥusayn's imprisonment and death in the event of his refusal to comply (*VI. villain attempts to deceive victim to take posession of him*). Ḥusayn, seeing the immediate threat to his life, seemingly capitulated, agreeing to give allegiance publicly the next morning (*VII. victim submits to deception, unwittingly helps enemy*). As Ḥusayn made preparations to leave for 'Irāq, his cousin Muslim b. 'Aqīl was executed by 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād at Kūfa (*VIII. villain causes harm to member of family*). As Ḥusayn prepared to leave, his half-brother Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya feared for Ḥusayn's life and did not want him to go to 'Irāq (*IX. one member of family lacks/desires something*). When Ḥusayn approached Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya to leave

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with him his last will and testament, he expressed his feelings to Ḥusayn, and explicitly requested that Ḥusayn not go to 'Irāq (*X. misfortune or lack is made known, hero is approached with request*). Ḥusayn insisted on continuing towards 'Irāq, and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya eventually accepted (*XI. seeker agrees to counteraction*). Ḥusayn then left for 'Irāq with his family and his companions (*XII. hero leaves home*). On the outskirts of Mecca, Umayyad guards attempted to prevent Ḥusayn from leaving, and Husayn penetrated through their roadblock. Soon thereafter, a caravan bearing luxurious gifts to Yazīd from his governor at Yaman crossed the path of Ḥusayn's caravan, and Ḥusayn confiscated the luxury items and distributed them to the caravan's employees and to the needy (both the blockade and the confiscated caravan in the Karbalā' narrative correspond to Propp's *XIII. hero is tested, interrogated, or attacked* and *XIV. hero reacts to test/attack*). The next stage identified by Propp (*XV. hero acquires use of a magical agent*) is one that has no correspondent in the Karbalā' narrative,[7] but the correspondence resumes immediately thereafter in the sequence, as Ḥusayn approached 'Irāq (*XVI. hero transferred, delivered, or led to object of search in another kingdom*). Then, on the outskirts of Kūfa, Ḥurr and his army confronted Ḥusayn and attempted to take him back to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād's court at Kūfa (*XVII. hero and villain join in direct combat*).

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[7] Even this apparent discrepancy is remedied in what we have termed the more radical Shī'ī versions of the Karbalā' narrative, where numerous dream scenarios are described along Ḥusayn's journey, whereby the future is revealed to him. In fact, the very notion that Ḥusayn is the *imām*, divinely chosen, inspired, and guided, may itself fit perfectly here. This is perhaps an Islamic version of Propp's (*XV. hero acquires use of a magical agent*).

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The confrontation was interrupted by the noon prayer, during which, in spite of the confrontation, Ḥurr insisted on Ḥusayn acting as leader of the prayer (*XVIII. hero is branded*). When the confrontation resumed after the prayer, Hurr eventually capitulated and allowed Ḥusayn to continue while he wrote to 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād for further orders (*XVIII. villain is defeated* and *XIX. hero's initial misfortune/lack is liquidated*). For a second time, the next step in Propp's sequence (*XX. Hero returns*) is absent from the Karbalā' narrative, but the correspondence resumes immediately thereafter, as Ḥurr and his entire army followed beside Ḥusayn's caravan (*XXI. hero is pursued*), until the orders came from 'Ubaydullāh b. Ziyād to cease the pursuit (*XXII. hero is rescued from pursuit*). This point in the narratives also marks Ḥusayn's arrival at Karbalā' after his journey through the desert from the Ḥijāz (*XIII. hero arrives in another country*). Then the number of troops against Ḥusayn mounted and 'Umar b. Sa'd, the commander in chief of the Umayyad army, arrived and propagated the next wave of Umayyad anti-Ḥusayn rhetoric (*XXIV. false hero presents unfounded claims*), insisting on Ḥusayn's submission (*XXV. difficult ordeal/choice is proposed to hero*). Ḥusayn refused to submit, but offered three possible peaceful solutions to the crisis (*XXVI. ordeal is resolved*), and the Umayyads' refusal of the peaceful resolution of the conflict resulted in defections by people who saw that the Umayyad army was after Ḥusayn's blood and not his oath of allegiance (*XXVII. hero is recognized* and *XXVIII. false hero/villain is exposed*). Just prior to the actual battle, Ḥusayn returned to his tent, dressed in new clothing and wore

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his battle gear (*XXIX. hero is given a new appearance or puts on new garments*). Then, during the actual battle, Ḥusayn and his companions, though few in number, inflicted many casualties on the Umayyad troops gathered against them (*XXX. villain is punished*). The conclusion of the folk Karbalā' narrative, Ḥusayn's martyrdom and reaching God in heaven may be seen as corresponding symbolically to the final stage in Propp's sequence (*XXXI. hero is married and ascends the throne*).

Even when considering that Propp himself offers a number of variations as possible sub-categories under each of these thirty-one stages he identified, the links between Propp's themes and their correspondences in the Karbalā' folk narrative are remarkably exact, in spite of potential fluidity. As noted in the case of XIII (hero is tested or attacked), there are two points in the Karbalā' narratives that can correspond, both thematically and sequentially, to this stage, namely: the Umayyad roadblock at the outskirts of Mecca, and the encounter with the Yamanī caravan headed for Yazīd. Also, examples such as stage XV (hero acquires the use of a magical agent), although it does not appear to have any correspondence in the historical Karbalā' narratives, does seem to correspond to points in the later folk versions of the Karbalā' narratives where Ḥusayn is depicted as having divinely-inspired visions of the future, and the assistance of large numbers of angel-warriors sent from heaven to fight for him.[8] Finally, although the final

[8] For accounts of troops of angel-warriors, see Ibn Ṭāwūs, 26,28. Also, clearly-retrospective accounts of various figures receiving prophetic visions of the future by wa of dreams is nowhere more prevalent than in Khwārazmī's *Maqtal*, where not only Ḥusayn sees the future in his dreams (see: Khwārazmī, 182, 186 ← Aḥmad b. A'tham)

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stage of Propp's sequence (XXXI. Hero is married and ascends the throne) does not seem to appear initially in the Karbalā' narrative at all, when considering that through the lenses of a piety conscious conmmunity for whom martyrdom equaled unification with God and the attainment of heavenly paradise, Ḥusayn's martyrdom at the end of the Karbalā' narrative can certainly be seen as the religious equivalent of the 'happily ever after' theme.

Moreover, although there are remarkable correspondences between the basic Karbalā' narrative and the thirty-one themes identified by Propp as inherent in nearly all of the folktales he has examined, there are also in the development of the folktale of Karbalā' aspects that are unique among the many examples in the entire genre of folk literature. The first is the Karbalā' folktale's literariness, and the second is its non-folk historicity. One of the features of folktales identified by Propp is that, unlike literary works, folktales have no author. Rather, they are "a phenomenon in the social and cultural history of peoples."[9] Indeed, the folk Karbalā' narrative certainly fits the latter description with regard to its role in the collective consciousness of the Shī'ī community. However, what is most unique about the folk version of the Karbalā' narrative is that it acquired a literary form (the *maqtal*) that few, if any other folk tale in the history of the world seems to have achieved: its own literary genre. Furthermore, unlike numerous

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but even Yazīd sees dreams prophesying throuble in Kūfa (Khwārazmī, 179 ← Ahmad b. A'tham).

[9] Propp, *Theory and History*, 6.

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examples of folktales rooted in ancient historical events but whose historicity is preserved only in the orally transmitted folktale, the historical events of the battle of Karbalā' continued to be documented and preserved by non-Shī'ī historians even centuries after the first appearance of the folk Karbalā' narratives penned by the hands of Shī'ī (or 'Abbāsid) authors. Both of these factors, its continued historicity and its achievement of the status of a literary genre, make the folk Karbalā' narratives a unique anomaly in the spheres of both folklore and history, a fact that would perhaps astonish and delight even Propp.

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APPENDIX C:

ON KARBALOLOGY

Since, aside from this thesis, there is no detailed study of other early Karbalā' related narratives in the original sources, this thesis appears to be the first to have uncovered a number of key issues never before examined in detail. Although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to research these topics, the following list presents potential topics for further study in this newly uncovered sub-field of early Islamic history

A. Nomenclature. Examination of the early sources have revealed numerous references to the children of Ḥusayn or his brother Ḥasan being named such names as Abū Bakr, or 'Uthmān, etc. Now these are considered stricktly Sunnī names. When did Shī'īs cease to make use of these names? Moreover, numerous names exist today that are clearly Shī'ī, and Karbalā' related, such as Ghulāmḥusayn, 'Alī Asghar, 'Alamdār, Sajjād, etc. There is more than enough information in the sources to support a study of when and how such distinct naming patterns developed

B. Architectural developments in Shī 'ī shrine architecture. Although some architectural studies of individual shrines have been done, there is no comprehensive

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examination of the development of Shī 'ī shrine architecture and the evolution of shrine cities.

C. Artistic depictions of the battle. There exist a number of artistic depictions of scenes of the battle, including miniatures in manuscript collections internationally, as well as tilework paintings and coffeehouse paintings in Iran. Artistic analysis of the development of such depictions, particularly in relation to the findings of this thesis, would be fascinating.

D. Poetry on the battle. A vast array of poems have been composed on the battle of Karbalā' for nearly fourteen centuries, and continue to be composed to this day. A literary study of the imagery and themes of the poems on Karbala would reveal a wealth of information on the verse depictions of the battle.

E. *Nawḥa* rhythmic sung poetry. Part of the commemoration ceremonies includes chest-beating to the rhythm of sung poetry on Karbalā'. The wide variety of styles of this singing from the Persian Gulf, to eastern Turkey, to the Indian subcontinent, is an untapped ethnomusicological goldmine.

F. Political/revolutionary Karbalā'. The influence of Karbalā' on revolutionary movements, particularly modern interpretations in Iran, is itself a fascinating topic. The analysis of pre-revolutionary rhetoric and their use of Karbalā' and Ḥusayn as symbols of

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resistance against tyranny[1] may be the equivalent of this early Islamic history thesis for the modern historian.

G. Karbalā' and Black nationalism/rap. The influence of Islam on American blacks has been studied, but there may be no studies of the influence of Shī'ī Islam on the same community. The same revolutionary political aspect of Islam that draws many such converts is reflected in the Shī'ī emphasis on Karbalā', and, indeed, audiocassettes of Karbalā' influenced rap have been available for some time now. [2]

H. Anthropological study of modern rituals. The Karbalā' commemoration ceremonies are nothing less than an anthropologist's dream come true. The vast array of rituals that have developed to commemorate the battle of Karbalā' and the wide variety of cultural and regional variations on the rituals make them a potential field of study in itself.

I. Hagiography of Ḥusayn. Although briefly discussed in the conclusion of this thesis, a detailed, scholarly study of the development of the hagiography of Ḥusayn is

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[1] There seems to be a shift between the Būyid and Safavid periods from referring to Ḥusayn as *thā'ir* to viewing him as *maẓlūm*. This has implications not only for the early and middle periods, but also for the modern period. In fact, radical politically active Shī'ī parties and governments such as the Islamic Republic of Iran expend much energy in promoting the concept of Ḥusayn as a revolutionary whose aim was to crush the unjust Umayyad system of government and set up in its place a 'just' regime which rules by the Qur'ān. The common view of Shī'īs of Ḥusayn as one whose resistance was passive, portrays him as one who was wronged by the Umayyads despite the fact that he did not call for revolution against them.

[2] See: Alī Abū Ṭālib son of Abdun Nūr [sic.], *The Murder of Imām Ḥusayn: an Accurate History in Rhythm and Rhyme* (San Diego: Grassroots Calling, n.d.), audio cassette series.

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even more possible now that specific sources and themes have been identified for future research.

J. Karbalā' *topoi*. A number of *topoi* have been identified in the Karbalā' sources that are not classified by Noth. A comprehensive study of these is certain to reveal a large number of new *topoi*, many of which may be specifically Karbalā' topoi.

K. Fāṭimī Ismā'īlī and Zaydī Karbalā'. Although this thesis did examine both a Fāṭimī and a Zaydī source, there still remains much unexplored territory with regard to literary compositions on Ḥusayn and Karbalā' in Fāṭimī and Zaydī literature. A short trip to libraries and bookstores in Yemen is sure to reveal a wide array of Zaydī literature on Karbalā' and Ḥusayn, and a comparison of that literature with the early sources will undoubtably reveal interesting results.[3]

M. Economics/commercialization of Karbalā'. Along with the commemoration of the Battle of Karbalā', there are numerous economic factors that may be studied from a marketing perspective. Numerous Karbalā'- specific products are sold in preparation for the commemoration ceremonies, including headbands, flags, black clothing, replica swords, standards, candles, red paint, etc., making the ceremonies perhaps one of the most commercially successful seasons of the business sector.

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[3] This is particularly important when noting the Zaydī theological view on *al-Imām al-Qā'im*. One would expect that the Zaydīs would view Ḥusayn as the epitome of just such an *imām*. Why is there not an abundance of early Zaydī literature on the subject?

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